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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 29 October 2015

The Speaker (The Hon. Shelley Elizabeth Hancock) took the chair at 10.00 a.m.

The Speaker read the Prayer and acknowledgement of country.

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome to the gallery 11 year 10 Australian Society students from Birrong Girls High School, guests of the member for Bankstown.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Notices of Motions

General Business Notices of Motions (General Notices) given.

Pursuant to resolution Government business proceeded with.

GAMING AND LIQUOR ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 27 October 2015.

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) [10.10 a.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Gaming and Liquor Administration Amendment Bill 2015. Alcohol is a substance that can be misused, and its misuse can cause serious harm to both individuals and the community. Its regulation is therefore a serious matter that should be fully and properly considered. Labor supports the reform of the structure of current regulatory arrangements in order to reduce duplication, promote transparency and increase efficiency. This bill has the potential to improve the current system and contains some positive measures, but Labor is concerned about the provisions that compromise and undermine the independence of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority. Therefore, Labor will oppose the bill and will move amendments in the other place to protect the independence of the authority.

Labor is disappointed with the way the Government has introduced this bill. An emerging theme over the past couple of weeks has been to ram through legislation, without consultation and certainly without regard to the importance of the bills that are coming before this House. Instead of allowing for full and proper consideration of the proposed changes, the Government dropped this bill in the House on Tuesday and is ramming the debate through today. It has given no explanation or justification for that. It would be helpful if the Minister could explain why the bill is so urgent and is being rushed through without consultation. It is as though the Government does not want its reform proposals to be fully considered and properly examined. That is a common theme that is emerging with this Government: secrecy, a lack of transparency and a lack of respect for the community on very important issues.

Prior to the bill's introduction into this Parliament there was scant consultation with key stakeholders and the public. The reform of alcohol laws, whatever form that may take, affects everyone. Everyone has a stake in the outcome. It is important that all stakeholders and the community are treated with respect in this regard. The Government has not attempted in any way to make a case for the

changes that it is proposing, particularly with regard to the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority. There has been no public consultation on the specific changes. The Government has merely asserted that it has been informed by submissions to the 2013 statutory review of the Liquor Act 2007 and the Gaming and Liquor Administration Act 2007. This ambush approach to reform proposals is not the way to build consensus in the community about changes to the State's regulatory architecture for alcohol.

There are some measures in this bill that the Opposition supports and considers are warranted. For example, the introduction of an affordable appeal mechanism is an important step forward for members of the community. Currently, decisions made by the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority can be appealed only to the Supreme Court. In practice this means that appeals are viable only for those with deep pockets and therefore are made only by commercial interests. The process is not currently open to the community or encouraging of the community's views. In most cases, the issues that are being appealed impact significantly on the community. Whatever happens with the reform of alcohol laws in this State, it is important that the community has a say.

The reform in this bill provides that licensing decisions made by the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority will be subject to review by the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This is a much more realistic review option for members of the community who are concerned about a licensing decision that has an impact on them. Labor congratulates the Government on moving in this direction. In my community the owners of a hotel are seeking to have its licence extended. The community has been vehemently opposed to that, but there are limited avenues available for appeal. Labor has serious concerns about the provisions that seek to undermine the independence of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority. That is Labor's main concern with this bill. Labor is disappointed that this bill is primarily aimed at undermining the independence of the authority.

I note that its very name, the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority, indicates how the authority should operate. The threats to the independence of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority have not been explained or justified. I hope that the Minister will elaborate. Labor looks forward to hearing more from the Minister. For example, the Minister is to assume some power over its operations, and its decisions are to take into consideration the views of the secretary of the Minister's department. These are direct and indirect encroachments upon the independence of the authority. They represent a white-anting and undermining of the independence of the authority. It is extraordinary that the Government is trying to ram through such a significant change this morning. In the 2013-14 annual report of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority its chairperson, Mr Chris Sidoti, indicated that the independence of the authority was critically important. He said:

The Crown Sydney investigation, the regulation and supervision of The Star and the day to day regulation of the liquor and gaming industries, all demonstrate the importance of having an independent regulator to ensure that liquor and gaming in the State are provided with integrity and a minimum of harm. Policy concerning these industries is properly a matter for the political processes of Government and Parliament but implementation and administration of the law are best done independently.

Importantly, he went on to say:

Independence is at the heart of the Authority's nature and functioning. It is clearly provided in the law we administer. It is enhanced through the appointment of statutory office holders to lead the Authority.

The chairperson speaks about the integrity of the authority being connected to its independence. That will be completely undermined by this bill. I look forward to hearing from the Minister how the integrity of the authority will be maintained under the changes that this bill proposes. I would also like to know the views of the chairperson on the bill. The chairperson has expressed the view that the authority should remain independent. Clearly the Government is ignoring that. The Government has not made a case as to why

the independence of the authority should be compromised, as it is in this bill. For example, the Government has not outlined any misconduct or maladministration.

These are issues I would have expected the Minister to raise when he brought the bill before the House. Until the Government provides answers to these questions, we believe that the authority should not be weakened. While the introduction of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal to the appeal process is worthwhile and I note that some provisions in the bill are merely administrative, the provisions that represent a threat to the independence of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority have not been properly explained or justified. I look forward to a response from the Minister on the issues I have raised. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [10.20 a.m.]: I speak in debate on the Gaming and Liquor Administration Amendment Bill 2015. The Government does not share the concerns of the Opposition. This is a common-sense bill that will reduce regulation and ensure best practice by providing that the appropriate government departments are responsible for the gaming and liquor industry and that the necessary regulatory constraints are in place. The bill does not undermine the independence of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority or allow the Government to assume the role of the authority. This bill will ensure best practice within the industry and the relevant government departments for the good of all.

The Government is proud of the approach it has taken to the liquor industry. When the Government came to office in 2011 a number of anomalies existed within the liquor industry, which created problems that leached into the wider community. Since we have been in office, from day one we have strived for best practice in a responsible gaming and liquor industry, as we understand the ramifications of this industry on the wider community. This bill is another step in ensuring best practice and regulation within this industry. As the Deputy Premier has clearly stated, the purpose of this bill is to implement liquor and gaming regulatory reforms, in accordance with Cabinet decisions. The bill does not undermine the independence of the authority, as was asserted by the member for Strathfield. Its purpose is to reduce delays caused by regulatory overlap between the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing and the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority, to improve transparency in decision-making, and to improve the effectiveness of the regulations. This bill will provide greater support for the industry to the benefit of the community.

This regulatory reform has been necessary as a result of the lengthy delays that have occurred in decision-making, even on matters such as an application for a liquor licence in a restaurant. The Government wants to support business by reducing red tape but it also must ensure that the appropriate regulations are in place so that businesses are accountable for their actions, particularly in an industry that can impact on the wider community. I have a background in the hospitality industry; it is an industry that I love. Prior to coming to this place I worked for 25 years in a hotel owned by my parents. It is a wonderful industry and contributes much to our communities. Pubs, clubs and restaurants create a positive vibe. But the industry needs to be regulated. In some instances, this involves self-regulation and the industry must take responsibility for its actions and for ensuring best practice.

The reforms that the Government introduced in 2011, such as, lockouts, identification scanners and bottle shop closure at 10.00 p.m., were not welcomed by some in the industry. But the industry has worked with the Government and, having seen the will of the Deputy Premier and the Government for reform, has come to understand that the Government wants the best outcomes for the industry and for the wider community. We need hotels, clubs and restaurants because they add to the social fabric of communities and to the economy, but they must operate in a responsible manner. I am proud to say that there has been a real shift over the past 4½ to five years, with industry getting on board and acknowledging the need for change. The Government, through this bill, will help the hospitality industry by reducing red tape and improving the approval process.

I commend the Deputy Premier for introducing this bill. He understands the issues and knows that

the Government must support the industry while also setting constraints to ensure best practice. The Government wants a successful and vibrant industry that provides employment as well as a safe industry that complies with regulations and works towards lessening impacts on the wider community. It is a balancing act. I know that the Deputy Premier and his office passionately support this industry as well as acknowledge that the industry has to take responsibility for its actions. I am sure we all agree that people should take responsibility for their own actions. That applies equally to the hotel, the club restaurant or the patron. It is not an excuse to say, "I had a few sherbets and I did not know what I was doing"—that is ridiculous and unacceptable. As a Government, an Opposition and as a community, we must hold the individual accountable for their own actions. Having a few drinks is no excuse for committing a violent act, be it domestic violence or any form of violence. That is not something that we will ever tolerate.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira) [10.30 a.m.]: I speak for the Opposition on the Gaming and Liquor Administration Amendment Bill 2015. Unfortunately the member for Camden has failed to justify the reasons for this bill. No doubt I missed the thanks to the 16 ministerial staff that is normally given. Obviously because he is a National Party member—

Mr Gareth Ward: He's a Liberal.

Mr RYAN PARK: Because he is a Liberal and because the Minister introducing the bill is a National Party member, he does not need his support, I understand that. I have a couple of issues with the bill. The first is the timing of the bill. I have been a member for some time and I understand that at this time of year Ministers receive a knock on their office door—knock, knock—"We need some more legislation to fill up the remaining sittings". I understand that, but the first problem is that when one is dealing with this type of legislation it is not appropriate for the Parliament and stakeholders to be given only a short period of time to examine the bill and to get a real understanding of its impact. Secondly, I cannot see—and I have not yet heard from either the Deputy Premier or the member for Camden—the justification for the Minister to assume some power over the operations of this independent body and its decisions, to require it to take into consideration the views of the secretary and the Minister's department.

We all understand that the regulation of alcohol is an issue that every Parliament has to deal with sensitively and sensibly. It will always be the case. Industry will always put pressure on members of Parliament to do less, in terms of regulation. I understand that and respect that is what industry would want. And there is always pressure from parts of the community for this place to do more. It is our role to get the balance right. I do not think we get the opportunity to do that well when we are introducing bills in a rush. The distribution, selling and retail supply of alcohol in New South Wales has been a sensitive issue, both over the last term of Parliament and—let us be honest—over many terms prior to that. Changes to liquor legislation and liquor laws should be given the respect they deserve and should be debated in a way where we are able to seek the views of the industry, its stakeholders and of concerned community members. I do not think this has been the case.

The Opposition agrees that there are parts of the bill that will improve the Act's efficiency. But we are concerned about its timing and a reduction in the independence of the authority and, more importantly, the lack of justification for the bill on this occasion. We have seen in our electorates, in this city and in the State the problems that arise when liquor legislation is not adhered to and the adverse impact that has on individuals and the community. The community expects us, as its representatives, to make sure that when we are debating important legislation such as this it is done in an informed way, where there is time to liaise, to seek advice, and to receive the contribution of stakeholders. That is not the case when legislation is rushed and rammed through Parliament in this way.

On too many occasions important legislation has been rushed through in such a manner. Yet on other occasions the House has waffled and spent a lot of time debating the benefits or otherwise of fossils. This legislation is important and should be considered carefully. The Opposition has some concerns about the justification the Government gives for what appears to be a reduction in the independence of the existing regulator. That is of concern, given the sensitivities around the regulation of

liquor in this State. I urge the Deputy Premier, when he introduces liquor legislation in the future, to give it the respect this Parliament and the community expect. Such legislation must be available for a number of days in order to allow both sides of the House to engage appropriately with stakeholders in order to inform the debate and to make sure we get the best outcome for industry but also, and most importantly, the best outcome for the communities that we represent.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [10.36 a.m.]: I never like to adversely reflect on my friend the member for Keira, but I make the observation that he talked about needing time. The bill is eight pages long. I know the member for Keira is a busy person. He is busy breaking election commitments those opposite made in relation to light rail and he is out fighting the member for Wollongong for factional control of the Illawarra, which takes all his time. But I would have thought he had the capacity to read eight pages of legislation and to provide some response to any provision. Everything the member for Keira said, in the main, I agreed with. He talked about being concerned about liquor legislation and the impacts of alcohol. We can all agree with that and I am sure that we all would. But it was a whimsical, lofty, whiff-whaff of waffle that we heard drifting across the table, with no real substance or contribution. That is something we have come to expect from the member for Keira.

Mr Mark Coure: What do they say about him in shadow Cabinet?

Mr GARETH WARD: Well, that is when they hold a shadow Cabinet and they do not have a secret shadow Cabinet meeting like they did in Kiama when they did not tell anybody about it. That is the Opposition's new strategy, for those who want to know: If you do not talk to any voters, if you do not speak to anybody, you might just win a few votes by accident. I support the Gaming and Liquor Administration Amendment Bill 2015. I intend to provide a little more substance than came from my friend opposite. The measures contained in this bill will improve the regulatory structures for the liquor and gaming sectors through the establishment of an integrated regulator, Liquor and Gaming NSW.

This bill is underpinned by a number of structural reforms that improve processes and community engagement, will reduce delays and will bolster monitoring compliance and enforcement efforts. I will turn to some of the local examples in these matters in due course. The bill also supports the objects of the Gaming and Liquor Administration Act 2007, which includes an object of promoting fair and transparent decision-making under the liquor and gaming laws. The bill will complement the Government's policy reforms to help reduce alcohol-related violence with a 20 per cent increase in the number of inspectors available across the State to undertake compliance functions when required.

The Government's policy reforms include: the three strikes disciplinary scheme targeting venues that repeatedly commit serious liquor law offences; precinct-based interventions for Kings Cross and the Sydney central business district that have applied a range of liquor regulatory restrictions including a 1.30 a.m. lockout and 3.00 a.m. last drinks measures; an escalating sanctions scheme that imposes significant penalties on licensees when liquor is sold to minors on licensed premises, including licence suspension and cancellation; and new best practice guidelines for licensees detailing steps to be taken to help prevent intoxication on licensed premises. I am not the sort of member who simply comes to this House and endorses everything governments do when I do not agree with them.

[Interruption]

I heard the interjection and laughter from the member for Bankstown who we know gets all of her directions from Sussex Street. If she listens she might realise that I always stand up for my community, and particularly small businesses. It is with that aim that I object to one of the Government's policy objectives—a statewide prohibition on takeaway liquor sales and deliveries after 10.00 p.m. is hurting regional pubs in particular. For many regional hotels, particularly in tourism areas like my electorate, a reform that was introduced to resolve problems in Sydney has severely damaged and hurt local business—not to mention local jobs and job opportunities for young people.

Let me provide an example to the House: a small country pub can sell takeaway alcohol to a resident staying on the premises after 10.00 p.m., but cannot sell alcohol to a neighbouring resident or indeed a tourist not staying on site. How utterly ridiculous. As a Liberal, I believe in greater individual freedoms and government getting out of the way of business. Whilst I am pragmatic, the Government needs to scrap this provision and only exercise this restraint in areas where the limitation on trading will demonstrate a greater policy objective around public safety. Many liquor accords, such as those that have operated in Wollongong, have seen sharp decreases in alcohol-related violence and crime as a result of working with local licensed venues and retailers. I call on the Government to scrap the 10.00 p.m. restraint on trade and only apply this restraint where there is a need to do so. Applying a solution for Sydney's problems in regional New South Wales makes no policy sense, and smacks of governments knowing more about local communities than do the people who live there.

I am pleased to note that action is being taken under the Government's policy reforms to improve compliance and reduce alcohol-related harm in the community. Under the escalating sanctions regime, which commenced in December 2014, the licence of the Royal Hotel at Temora was suspended for 28 days in May 2015 after liquor was detected being sold to a minor. In August 2015 the licence of Liquor Stax at Terrigal was also suspended for seven days after an employee sold liquor to a minor. Earlier this month the licence of Liquorland, Bondi Junction, was also suspended for 14 days after an employee sold liquor to a minor. Action under the escalating sanctions regime is pending against a number of other venues, pending the outcome of court proceedings and other matters.

Data published by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research in September 2015 shows that there has been an 8.3 per cent annual reduction in alcohol-related non-domestic assaults on licensed premises across New South Wales between July 2011 and June 2015. This trend is improving with a 12.6 per cent reduction in alcohol-related non-domestic assaults on licensed premises recorded in the year to June 2015 compared to the year to June 2014. A number of the Government's policy reforms will undergo a statutory review in 2016, including a review of the Sydney central business district and Kings Cross lockout and last drinks measures and the three strikes disciplinary scheme. These reviews will provide the opportunity for the Government to consult with stakeholders and the community as to whether the policy objective of those reforms is still valid and whether the terms of the reforms are still appropriate for securing those objectives. I note the comments of the member for Keira about consultation and I point out that that would be the opportunity for the industry to reflect on those issues.

This bill reflects the Government's continuing strong commitment to reducing alcohol- and gambling-related harm through the establishment of an integrated regulator with an increased focus on monitoring compliance and enforcement across the regulated sectors. Having said that, I will reserve some constructive criticism for the licensing authority and pass comment on the application process for a licensed premises in the area I represent as the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra. It took 11 months for the Humber to gain a licence to operate. During this process, there was virtually no communication around the licensing process—an enormous frustration for the applicant. There is presently no indication as to when the authority needs to respond to licensing applications.

In considering the licence, the authority used State-based statistics and did not take into account the true population levels of the Wollongong central business district. It seems that some elements of the bureaucracy are more interested in process than results. Whilst I appreciate the sensitivity around liquor licences, there must be a point where the rights of business people and entrepreneurs are considered too. It seems the authority fails to understand that unnecessary delays lead to significant legal fees and other costs that can deter investors in licensed venues.

Take, for example, the authority's uneven approach to compliance. Recently, the Humber received a claim that the \$130 to \$140 ticketed event for Melbourne Cup at Humber somehow contravenes liquor promotion laws by possibly encouraging "excess consumption" or even "excess discounting", despite the fact that it is the most expensive event and other venues are cheaper, and some even providing longer drinks packages than the Humber is. Not to mention the fact that there are already

strong responsible service of alcohol laws in place. Indeed, in a recent letter, the authority threatened to invoke section 102A of the Liquor Act to have this event cancelled.

That sort of arrogance from that authority needs to be called into question. It is appropriate that this Parliament is used to pass judgement on those public servants that operate in relation to these matters. I am a staunch and strong supporter of our State's public service, but I am also bound as a member of Parliament to stand up and call out abuse of provisions, or the abuse of process when it occurs, and I saw that in relation to this particular instance. I will never simply be a person who reads the talking points presented. I will always do my job as a local member of Parliament first and foremost.

I think the bill on the whole is good reform. I thank the Deputy Premier and his staff for their assistance. I am very grateful for all that they have done in this space. They are working incredibly hard to get strong, robust liquor laws in place that protect young people and the industry and I commend them for being very consultative, but that will not stop me from coming to this place and speaking on behalf of my local venues, my licensed premises, the industry and the community that want the balanced sort of laws referred to by the member for Keira that we all want this place. But that has to involve fairness for all concerned, not just one side of the debate.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [10.46 a.m.]: On behalf of The Greens I address the Gaming and Liquor Administration Amendment Bill 2015. I draw the attention of members to a submission dated 30 August from the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education in response to the statutory review, which outlines in my mind very clearly the impact that alcohol has on this State and, as is quoted, alcohol-related harm is very significant. It states that more than 1,200 people die as a result of alcohol, almost 50,000 are hospitalised, almost 15,000 are affected by alcohol-related domestic assaults and over 10,000 are affected by domestic assaults.

The Government is spending over \$1 billion on alcohol abuse, while the total social costs of alcohol are \$3.87 billion per year, or just over \$15,000 per household. The human and economic toll is significant and that is why we need to have strong regulations and we need to take a strong approach towards the management of the harms of alcohol. I draw the attention of the House to the NSW ACT Policy Alliance submission to the review process. It is an alliance of more than 41 organisations that are working to reduce alcohol-related harms by ensuring that evidence-based solutions inform alcohol policy discussions. That is the heart of The Greens concerns about this proposed legislation. This legislation will fundamentally weaken the independent authority whose job it is to ensure that alcohol-related harms, based on evidence, are reduced.

There are three major issues in the bill. First, the functions of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority [ILGA] will be severely reduced by this proposed legislation. The entire staff of ILGA will be transferred to the Department of Justice and this bill ensures that the authority will only remain as a government-appointed board that presides over decisions determined by the regulations. At this stage the Minister has indicated that those decisions will be all gaming machine entitlement and casino licensing decisions, as well as "high-risk licence applications such as new bottle shops or nightclubs". Second, ILGA decisions can now be appealed at the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT]—a non-expert body will be dealing with these appeals. The bill includes provisions that will enable certain decisions, determined by regulations, made by ILGA to be appealed at NCAT. The range of people who can appeal decisions has been severely restricted to only the applicant and:

a person:

- (i) who was required to be notified of the prescribed application, and
- (ii) who made a submission to the Authority or the Secretary in respect of the prescribed application.

Lastly, the authority must take into consideration recommendations and submissions made by the secretary when determining an application, fundamentally weakening the independence of this organisation. The truth is that this body is being weakened to appease a powerful lobby. We know that many sections of the alcohol industry are very dissatisfied with the decisions of ILGA. The ILGA staff are important to its independence. Under this reform ILGA will retain its legislative responsibilities for liquor and gaming licensing and disciplinary decisions; however, it will do so with staff who are part of the Government's bureaucracy and consequently subject to pressure and influence from the Minister and his staff. In the 2013-14 ILGA annual report, Chair Chris Sidoti wrote:

Independence is at the heart of the Authority's nature and functioning. It is clearly provided in the law we administer. It is enhanced through the appointment of statutory office holders to lead the Authority.

This is the important section:

It is made possible through staff who are accountable only to the Authority and resources under the control of the Authority. Many issues relating to staff assisting the Authority and the budget available to the Authority have been resolved during the year, furthering the Authority's capacity to do its job independently and effectively.

The Government is trashing that objective under this proposal. It is clear that ILGA has been under attack from the gambling and alcohol industry for many years. That has been demonstrated by a range of comments from the industry, lawyers who support the industry and boutique law firms that have criticised and attacked ILGA for its independence. It seems to us that the Government has caved in to pressure from the pubs and clubs lobby, opened the floodgates and undermined the independence of this critical authority. It is our view that the authority is being punished because it has exercised its independence to protect communities by limiting opportunities for excessive gambling and alcohol abuse.

We know the industry has been annoyed by the outcomes, but the authority has responded to the evidence of harm caused by high densities of liquor outlets and concentrations of poker machines in particular in disadvantaged communities. This legislation is turning the authority into a toothless tiger by stripping it of staff who are free from any political pressure. As the chair indicated in the 2013-14 annual report, under this legislation staff who are engaged directly by the authority and who are accountable to and resourced by the authority are having their independence stripped away by being placed into the Minister's department. A critical safeguard against problem gambling and alcohol abuse is being brought to heel. Our concern is that the independence and capacity of the authority will be significantly undermined if this bill goes ahead.

As we understand it, compliance regulation at both The Star and Barangaroo casinos will no longer be in the hands of the independent authority. Instead, the Minister's public servants will be in charge of monitoring conditions that are supposed to stop the spread of organised crime and money laundering. We know that Labor and Liberal members threw themselves at Packer when he wanted another casino licence. Both parties voted to issue him and Crown a second casino licence without even a public tender. If a council had issued the same type of licence without a public tender the Minister would sack that council, but this Parliament can make a decision about a licence worth around \$900 million without so much as a public tender. It is quite disgraceful.

Our concern is that this is the next step in the industry's push for a deregulated and weakened alcohol and gambling environment. We know the industry successfully destroyed the Licensing Court. It did that quite effectively. Now it is lining up to shackle its successor to ensure that there is ministerial influence and appeal to a non-expert tribunal. The people here who have been before NCAT will know that it does not in its existing form have the same expertise, evidence base and capacity to thoroughly understand the issues as the independent authority. We are concerned that the alcohol and gambling lobby knows its members will have more success with their push to expand when they can influence the

system politically rather than remain in the hands of a genuinely independent and evidence-based authority.

Having a fully independent and evidence-based authority should be at the heart of this system. The authority should be at arm's length from the Government, Ministers, ministerial decision-making and Ministers' staff. The ILGA chair has clearly indicated the importance of that. It is at the heart of the effectiveness of the independent authority. This legislation is severely weakening the authority and bringing it to heel. In our mind it is appeasing the powerful liquor and gambling lobby. The Greens are very concerned about this legislation. In conclusion, I draw the attention of members to submissions made by the NSW and ACT Alcohol Policy Alliance [NAAPA] and the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education [FARE], which has funded research at the University of Wollongong.

Those organisations have looked at the evidence. Our concern is that the evidence base will not be the focus in this new arrangement. Again, we are concerned that NCAT does not have the same capacity or level of expertise as the independent authority to assess the evidence when looking at applications. The Greens oppose this legislation. We are very concerned about the way in which the Government is regulating these matters. We hope the Government will see sense and consider the amendments that will be moved in the other place.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) [10.56 a.m.]: I support the Gaming and Liquor Administration Amendment Bill 2015. There has been growing concern about the regulatory arrangements applying to the liquor and gaming sectors. Those concerns have included the inconsistent compliance and enforcement approaches, the significant delays in determining disciplinary matters and the extensive delays in determining both routine and contentious licensing applications. The concerns have also included the absence of a review mechanism for licensing decisions made by the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority [ILGA] and a lack of certainty in decision-making. Stakeholders continue to express concerns about compliance and policy cohesion, customer service, the lack of business certainty, the risk of regulatory capture for casino inspectors and unacceptable delays in a decision point being reached for routine and complex licensing issues. It is increasingly evident that the regulatory system is flawed and the cause of many issues.

The flaws have the potential to undermine the Government's reforms to reduce alcohol-related violence and harm that have been introduced over the past two years. Those reforms have included a statewide restriction on takeaway liquor sales after 10.00 p.m. and a risk-based licence fee scheme that reflects the level of regulatory effort for and the risks associated with each licensed premises. The reforms have also included precinct reforms for the Sydney central business district and Kings Cross that introduce a 1.30 a.m. lockout, 3.00 a.m. last drinks, drink restrictions, banning orders for violent patrons, and ID scanners in high-risk Kings Cross venues. For small business operators such as restaurants and cafes, navigating the regulatory landscape in order to serve liquor with meals is proving to be increasingly problematic and sometimes detrimental to operating a business at all. In addition to dealing with council in obtaining development consent for alcohol use on the premises, approval must also be obtained under the liquor laws.

While that process is important and appropriate to ensure planning and licensing requirements have been met, in some instances restaurateurs have had a licence application pending for up to four months before the ILGA when there have been no outstanding issues or objections associated with the application. Four months is just too long. Those delays have often been associated with backlogs in the processing of applications by the ILGA and its staff. They are unnecessary delays, especially for small businesses that need to start trading immediately to cover their start-up costs, including rent and stock, the fit-out of their premises and looking after their staff. In one case a liquor licence that was sought for an inner city cafe took four months to be processed. It involved multiple applications, a name change for the business and considerable follow-up on behalf of the applicant to finalise the matter.

Currently, once an application is received by the ILGA applicants and others have difficulty

obtaining information on its status. That is exacerbated by the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing not being able to provide information to applicants who request information on the status of their application that cannot be obtained from the ILGA. One of the objectives of this bill is to reduce the delays being experienced in the processing of routine applications such as liquor licences for restaurants. That will be achieved by enabling routine licence applications to be determined under delegations from the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority by the new regulator, Liquor and Gaming NSW.

The focus on Liquor and Gaming NSW in determining these matters will be timely and will ensure consistent decision-making; that is, decision-making that is consistent with the objectives of the Gaming and Liquor Administration Act 2007 and the Government's priority to improve service delivery. Liquor and Gaming NSW will also be responsible for ensuring that other statutory requirements are met, including the responsible service of alcohol. Having Liquor and Gaming NSW determine routine matters will improve processes and service delivery by establishing a one-stop shop within the Department of Justice. This will also address the overlap and duplication that currently exists whereby an application that is lodged with the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing [OLGR] in the Sydney central business district [CBD] is then sent to the ILGA at Parramatta for processing.

In addition to these legislative reforms, significant work is also underway to enable administrative and processing improvements to be realised. This includes better case management of applications and the capacity for all applications to be lodged online, and improvements to business systems more broadly in the new Liquor and Gaming NSW. It will overcome the current situation whereby there is no technological interface between the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing and the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority. This bill will also provide greater business certainty by enabling a review to be sought of a delegated decision for a liquor licence application. The types of delegated decisions reviewable by the authority will be prescribed by regulation, and are expected to include an application for a new liquor licence for a restaurant or cafe.

Certain delegated decisions will be reviewable by the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority, with Liquor and Gaming NSW providing administrative support to the authority as part of this process. Currently, a decision to grant or refuse a license application is final, with no capacity for the decision to be reviewed. For a small business, a decision to refuse a licence application can be devastating particularly for the people who have poured their savings into it or borrowed heavily to start a new business. This bill provides an important safeguard in this regard. I thank the Deputy Premier and his staff for their work on this bill. The reforms underpinning it will improve service delivery for small business, and provide greater transparency and certainty while reducing processing delays for operators. I commend this bill to the House.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [11.01 a.m.]: I take this opportunity to make a brief contribution to debate on the Gaming and Liquor Administration Amendment Bill 2015. I note the words used by the member for Kiama earlier when he decided to mock the member for Keira for raising, quite rightly, the fact that this bill is being rushed through this House. I had a quick read of the recent report of the Legislation Review Committee to see what it thought of this bill and whether there were any particular trespasses on personal rights, for example. Low and behold, the bill is nowhere to be found in the report of the Legislation Review Committee. It has not yet been assessed by the committee. It would not surprise anyone on this side of the House to find that this Government does not seek additional opportunities to review its legislation prior to introducing it into this House.

I listened intently to the contributions of the member for Kiama and the member for Holsworthy, who had a lot of gripes about the granting of particular liquor licences in their electorates. It may be indicative of why the Government has chosen to ram this bill through the House—it does not like an independent authority dealing with gaming and liquor licences in this State. The crux of the matter is that this Government is effectively trying to end the independence of the authority, which grants licences in such a way that no Minister can inadvertently influence the outcome of a licence application—that would be corrupt behaviour. Perhaps the member for Oatley will speak about his gripes as well. I am sure that

more members from the other side will speak on this bill. Their contributions have made it clear that those opposite want the opportunity to influence the outcome of an entirely independent process, and that concerns Opposition members. I accept that some parts of the bill may have value. I am very fair to members opposite—

Mr Ryan Park: Fair and firm.

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK: That is right: I am fair and firm. I do not object to the introduction of the NSW Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal [NCAT] into the appeal process. There should be a proper appeal process, and I accept that appealing to the Supreme Court can be a cost prohibitive and a very lengthy process. Therefore, having NCAT undertake appeals is an appropriate course of action. But I am concerned about the independence of the regulator. I take this opportunity to quote the chairperson of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority [ILGA], Mr Chris Sidoti, who said:

The Crown Sydney investigation, the regulation and supervision of The Star and the day to day regulation of the liquor and gaming industries, all demonstrate the importance of having an independent regulator to ensure that liquor and gaming in the State are provided with integrity and a minimum of harm. Policy concerning these industries is properly a matter for the political processes of Government and Parliament but implementation and administration of the law are best done independently.

Independence is at the heart of the Authority's nature and functioning. It is clearly provided in the law we administer. It is enhanced through the appointment of statutory office holders to lead the Authority. It is made possible through staff who are accountable only to the Authority and resources under the control of the Authority.

The bill goes against those important statements and does the complete opposite, which concerns me. Potentially the Minister will be in a position of having influence when he or she should not have. It may put the Minister's staff in a position of having influence. For example, Government members may approach the Minister's staff or the Minister to try to influence the outcome of a particular licence application. That concerns me, and it certainly concerns those on this side of the House. Although some elements of the bill may be worth supporting, the Opposition will oppose it in this House, and we will move a number of amendments in the other House to ensure the independence of the authority. I am also concerned that the Government decided to rely on a statutory review of the Liquor Act 2007 and the Gaming and Liquor Administration Act 2007 as the basis for introducing this legislation when at no stage did the review indicate that it would propose these significant and dramatic changes to the authority. I reiterate that the Opposition will oppose the bill. We hope the Government has a bit more sense than to create a range of problems for itself down the track.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [11.07 a.m.]: The Gaming and Liquor Administration Amendment Bill 2015 introduces the legislative component of liquor and gaming regulatory reforms designed to reduce delays and the overlap between the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing [OLGR] and the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority [ILGA]. It will improve the transparency of decision-making and the effectiveness of the Government's regulatory efforts. The need for reform in the liquor and gaming space has been reinforced by lengthy delays in decision-making, including delays in determining routine and low-risk matters such as obtaining a liquor licence for a restaurant or cafe. I have witnessed firsthand some of the delays faced by restaurant and cafe owners in my electorate. Some disciplinary matters have taken more than 12 months to be determined, which is at odds with the Government's objective of minimising alcohol and gaming-related harm, and ensuring these industries are operated responsibly and in line with community expectations and concerns.

The bill retains the ILGA as a decision-maker for contentious licensing proposals, such as an application for a new hotel licence and disciplinary matters, including determining a third strike or a complaint against a licensed venue. However, the bill requires ILGA to have regard to any

recommendations made by the Secretary of the Department of Justice in relation to any matter before the ILGA. All other decision-making under the gaming and liquor legislation will be delegated to senior officers in a new regulator within the Department of Justice to be known as Liquor and Gaming NSW, which will also absorb regulatory and policy functions currently undertaken by the OLGR. I acknowledge the hard work of the Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing, and member for Dubbo, in introducing this bill, which will reduce some of the delays that have occurred for many years, some of which I have witnessed in my electorate.

I will now respond to some of the concerns raised by those opposite. The first is consultation. The member for Keira said that key stakeholders had not been consulted. That is incorrect. I am advised that in developing this bill the Deputy Premier and his departmental staff met personally with key stakeholders in the industry from across New South Wales, including the NSW and ACT Alcohol Policy Alliance, the Cancer Council, the Australian Medical Association, the Police Association of New South Wales and the Thomas Kelly Foundation. Those groups were invited to provide input into the make-up of the community access team to ensure that it met community needs. They were also invited to engage directly with the reform project on any concerns. None of the key stakeholders raised any concerns.

The member for Balmain and the member for Bankstown raised staff independence and the role of the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC]. It is not the control of staff that is important; it is the control of the decision that ILGA has been given, which is the capacity to review any delegated decision made by its staff. As I said, the control remains with the independent body; it is merely the administrative processes and infrastructure that are being moved to the department. The member for Balmain made much of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] not being an expert body. The Supreme Court is not an alcohol and gaming expert body; the NCAT is an expert body in reviewing administrative decisions, which is exactly what ILGA does. The NCAT is already responsible for reviewing some decisions of ILGA, such as long-term banning orders, and it is an area of decision-making with which the NCAT is already familiar.

The bill will improve transparency, and reduce the delays and overlap between OLGR and ILGA. It will also ensure that some of the red tape is removed. This is a common sense bill and I again thank the Deputy Premier for introducing it. While the bill also enables the responsible Minister to issue directions to ILGA, these directions will be limited to administrative arrangements designed to improve timeliness and transparency of its decision-making. The ministerial directions will not affect ILGA's status as an independent decision-maker under the gaming and liquor legislation. The reforms contained in the bill are focused on improving liquor and gaming regulatory structures, and will not alter the Government's policy settings in these spaces. Nor will they interrupt the scheduled statutory review to be undertaken in 2016, such as the review of the Sydney central business district and Kings Cross lockout. The reforms, including the establishment of Liquor and Gaming NSW, are expected to be in place by the middle of next year. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) [11.15 a.m.]: I do not support the Gaming and Liquor Administration Amendment Bill 2015, which appears to weaken the enforcement powers and independence of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority [ILGA]. I have not had the opportunity to properly consider this bill because it is being rushed through the House—like many others at this time of year—without members being given sufficient time to assess and consult on its impacts. ILGA should maintain its own staff with enforcement and inspection powers to ensure its decisions on liquor and gaming licences are independent of government influence. ILGA's aim is solely to prevent impacts from liquor and gaming.

It is ironic that the Government has imposed blanket 1.30 a.m. lockout laws on liquor venues across my electorate except, of course, the casino, including good operators that help civilise our night economy, yet it is weakening the body that is best placed to discipline rogue operators. The focus of future regulation must be disciplinary action to prevent intoxication and to encourage responsible management, not excessive blanket conditions while maintaining a ban on 24-hour licensing. We need a

strong independent enforcement body to do this. Similarly, with gaming there needs to be more focus on operators that encourage problem gambling and allow patrons to lose money; this is best policed by an independent operator. The ILGA has been criticised for refusing liquor and poker machine licences, and I am concerned this could be at the heart of the bill. Liquor and gaming provide profits to government. That is why an independent body must have enforcement powers. I cannot support the bill.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Damien Tudehope and set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

FIREARMS AND WEAPONS PROHIBITION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015

SECURITY INDUSTRY AMENDMENT (REGULATION OF TRAINING ORGANISATIONS) BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 27 October 2015.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) [11.18 a.m.]: I commend the cognate Security Industry Amendment (Regulation of Training Organisations) Bill 2015, but first I will focus on the Firearms and Weapons Prohibition Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. This bill will ensure that the law on firearms and weapons gets the balance right between ensuring the safety of people in our community—which is the priority of any government—and the rights of those who wish to legally and safely use firearms in controlled environments. On 15 December last year, the siege at the Lindt Chocolate Cafe in Martin Place, which is about 200 metres from this Chamber, reminded us of the consequences of guns falling into the hands of those who wish to do harm to others.

This Government is committed to keeping firearms out of the hands of those who wish to do harm to others. It is through bills such as this that the Government intends to get the balance right. The bill is not a knee-jerk reaction to that tragic day, nor is it entirely reactive legislation. The Government has taken a highly consultative approach in drafting the bill, particularly in light of the recommendations in the review of the Martin Place siege, which was commissioned jointly by the Federal and New South Wales governments immediately after that tragic event.

The Firearms and Weapons Prohibition Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 reflects the considered and measured approach that this Government takes to all matters relating to crime and the law. It ensures the right balance between the freedom of individuals to use firearms legally and safely in a controlled environment, and the right of the community to live safely, unharmed by criminals in our society. This bill has three key elements. It legislates for new offences, increases penalties for existing offences and introduces preventative measures. All three elements are proportionate and targeted, with the appropriate checks and balances to ensure that those who do the right thing are not caught in the net.

I turn to the legislating of new offences. It will now be an offence to possess a stolen firearm or firearm part. This is a common-sense measure that will ensure that we break down the underground market for stolen firearms and send the strong message that the community demands. It will also be illegal to manufacture firearms and prohibited weapons on three-dimensional [3D] printers. This includes the possession of digital blueprints of a firearm or a prohibited weapon on a 3D printer or an electronic milling machine. This is an entirely proactive measure. Although I am unaware of any crimes committed in our State with weapons created on 3D printers, this Government is trying to prevent these crimes before they happen by getting tough on the homemade production of firearms and weapons.

The supply and purchase of firearms and weapons should be in full accordance with the law. I am sure that no legal owner and safe user of such weapons would dispute that. This bill proposes to increase the maximum sentence for defacing firearms from five to 14 years imprisonment. No legal and safe user of firearms has any need to deface their weapons in a way that limits their ability to be registered or

tracked. We cannot afford to allow defaced weapons to be traded or, worse, used in our community. The bill will amend key firearms offences to increase their maximum penalties from 10 to 14 years imprisonment. That includes offences relating to unregistered firearms, the acquisition of firearms or firearm parts without a licence or permit, the shortening or converting of firearms and the making of false or misleading applications under the Firearms Act 1996.

I wholeheartedly believe that this move is in accordance with community expectations and reflects this Government's desire to keep firearms offenders off our streets so that they are no longer a threat to public safety. The bill will further amend the Firearms Act to enable the Commissioner of Police to consider the spent convictions of applicants for firearm permits and licences. This is another common-sense measure, with the right checks and balances, that will keep firearms out of the wrong hands. I commend Commissioner Andrew Scipione, APM, for the fine job he is doing in what is arguably one of the State's most difficult positions. This measure will not stop otherwise safe and law-abiding prospective firearm owners from purchasing firearms, but it will go a long way to keeping our community safe.

When I contested the last election my prospective constituents told me that, as their voice in this place, ensuring community safety should be my number one priority. In the feedback surveys I have conducted in my electorate since the election, the response from my constituents is either that they want the community to be even safer or that they are glad to live in such a safe and peaceful community. I feel an obligation to the people of my electorate to keep Seven Hills a safe and peaceful community. The Deputy Premier and Minister for Justice and Police, the Hon. Troy Grant, no doubt feels more than anyone else in this place the responsibility and obligation to ensure that the people of New South Wales live in a safe and peaceful community. Before being elected to this House, the Deputy Premier spent 22 years of his life serving the people of this State in the NSW Police Force.

As an excellent regional area representative, the Deputy Premier is no doubt fully conversant with the issues that surround the legal and safe ownership of firearms for occupational or recreational purposes. No-one in this Government knows more about the importance of striking the right balance in firearms legislation than the Deputy Premier. The people of New South Wales should feel assured that the amendments outlined in this bill will make them safer than ever. Those who use firearms legally and safely in controlled environments should also feel reassured that they will still be able to enjoy their sport or carry out their occupational duties. I have no doubt that the bill before the House today strikes the right balance.

In my discussions with the special constables deployed at this place to ensure the safety of the people in this Chamber, in my discussions with the member for Parramatta, my neighbouring electorate that witnessed the extremist firearm crime resulting in the death of Curtis Cheng, and in my discussions with the people of Seven Hills, the message is clear and uniform: Keep stolen firearms and illegal weapons out of the wrong hands, and keep off of our streets those who wish to do harm to others. This bill is close to the heart of every member of the Government, not least because of the Parliament's proximity to violent gun crime in the past 12 months. It is also close to my heart—I served in the NSW Police Force for more than 25 years. I know only too well the devastating impact firearms and illegal weapons crimes can have on our community, family and loved ones.

I know the importance of keeping firearms and weapons away from those who seek to harm us. I know the difference that keeping such individuals off of our streets can make to the safety of communities. The bill is entirely deserving of support from all members of Parliament. There may be some in the community who feel that the bill goes too far, and others who feel that it does not go far enough. The Government has the balance right, because it is committed to fulfilling its primary objective of keeping the people of New South Wales safe as they go about their daily lives. It is unfortunate that it took the loss of Katrina Dawson and Tori Johnson to remind us of the onus of getting the balance right. On this occasion the Government has the balance right, and the good people of Seven Hills and New South Wales should be proud of that. I commend the bills to the House.

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) [11.27 a.m.]: I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Firearms and Weapons Prohibition Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and the cognate Security Industry Amendment (Regulation of Training Organisations) Bill 2015. The Opposition will not oppose the bills. Once again, we are being forced to examine legislation that has been rushed through without any regard for the proper processes of this place. I do not know how many times I have stated that in the past two weeks. Debate on important legislation is being left to the last minute.

The Firearms and Weapons Prohibition Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 is particularly important because it gives effect to recommendations related to the review of the Martin Place siege. I would have thought that greater emphasis would be given to consultation with the Opposition on such an important bill. That has not been the case. In his second reading speech the Minister indicated that the bill deals with recommendations of the joint Commonwealth and New South Wales review of the Martin Place siege, which reported in January 2015. The report of the review said:

... the Commonwealth and the states and territories should give further consideration to measures to deal with illegal firearm.

The report found that Man Haron Monis had a pump action shotgun in his possession. He did not have a firearms licence, and the gun may have been a "grey market firearm". Many gun owners in this State do the right thing. This bill is aimed not at them but at those who would engage in criminal activity. As the Minister outlined, certain firearms present a greater risk to public safety as they are more likely to be used for a criminal purpose. This bill deals with those firearms. I bring to the attention of the House the number of shootings that have occurred since this Government came to power. There have been more than 520 shootings—more than 75 so far this year—and around 40 of those shootings have been fatal.

Of course, not all those shootings would have involved a prohibited firearm, which is what this bill addresses. I agree with the Minister that it is surprising that there is currently no offence for the possession of a stolen firearm. This bill rightly seeks to rectify that by introducing a new offence. The bill increases the maximum penalty for a number of offences, which, according to the Minister, is aimed at reflecting the serious risk posed by some firearms. The bill provides for a consistent maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment for the possession, use, supply or acquisition of a firearm where the firearm is a prohibited firearm, has had its identification marks, numbers or letters defaced or altered, is unregistered, is stolen, or is not authorised by licence or permit to be in the possession of that person.

Section 51F provides that a person must not possess or control a digital blueprint for the manufacture of a firearm on a 3D printer or electronic milling machine. The maximum penalty for this offence is 14 years imprisonment. Importantly, the bill recognises advances in the online environment and in technology and it captures blueprints held in a cloud environment or by a server outside of New South Wales or Australia. This new offence is appropriate at this time. It recognises the important role we play in this place in reacting to issues as they arise and to change, particularly in changing technology. While the Opposition will not oppose this bill we do have concerns about the amendments to sections 10 and 30 of the Firearms Act, which allow for the Commissioner of Police to consider the spent convictions of applicants for firearms licences and permits.

These amendments allow for section 12 of the Criminal Records Act not to apply in relation to an application for a firearms licence or permit. Spent convictions apply to those convictions where a bond was given or a sentence of less than six months was imposed. For a conviction to be spent, an adult must be crime free and must not have been in prison for the past 10 years, and for a child the applicable period is three years. Whether those spent offences impact on a person's application for a firearms licence or permit is left to the discretion of the Commissioner of Police. It is hoped that discretion is used wisely, given these people have done their time and their sentence was less than six months. As I said, we have concerns about that aspect of the bill, but we will not oppose it.

I turn now to the Security Industry Amendment (Regulation of Training Organisations) Bill 2015. This is important legislation which ensures the NSW Police Force has the requisite authority to regulate and audit private training providers who offer security training qualifications in New South Wales. The importance of the quality of well-trained security officers cannot be overstated. They are often the first line of defence at community, entertainment and sporting events across New South Wales. It is therefore imperative that they have the knowledge and skills to deal with complex security issues in a professional and secure manner. Unfortunately, the security industry in New South Wales has not always been characterised by these high expectations of service delivery.

The Independent Commission Against Corruption 2009 Operation Columba inquiry shone a light on the provision of security training in New South Wales. The corrupt conduct that was uncovered as part of that inquiry was a wake-up call on just how important this issue is and why we all must work together to ensure security officers have completed all the necessary training and gained the appropriate qualifications, and that the training and qualifications are of a high standard. One of the key recommendations of that review was for greater oversight and quality control by the NSW Police Force. While the NSW Police Force has taken important steps towards the practical implementation of this recommendation, it is important that after six years this recommendation is enshrined in legislation so that there is no conflict with Commonwealth legislation.

This bill amends the Security Industry Act 1997 to ensure that the NSW Police Force has total certainty with regard to its role and responsibilities as the key regulator of the New South Wales security industry. I am pleased the Minister has confirmed that the Commonwealth supports the continued involvement of the NSW Police Force in regulating the security industry. As I have indicated, the Opposition does not oppose the bills. However, we are disappointed that, once again, an important bill, particularly a bill that deals with the recommendations from the New South Wales Martin Place Siege review report, has been rushed through this House with very little consultation with the Opposition. The Opposition will support these bills.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) [11.34 a.m.]: I support the Firearms and Weapons Prohibition Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and the cognate Security Industry Amendment (Regulation of Training Organisations) Bill 2015. The Firearms and Weapons Prohibition Legislation Amendment Bill demonstrates why it is so great to live in Australia. Australia as a country has addressed firearms crimes and the effects of firearms on communities. It is interesting to note that in a recent debate held between Democratic Party candidates for the presidential election in the United States of America, Hillary Clinton praised the manner in which Australia had dealt with firearms legislation and suggested that perhaps it was time for the United States of America to consider our legislation.

Australia clearly has reduced homicides from firearms offences. Just as importantly, the number of suicides involving the use of firearms has also been reduced by as much as 42 per cent. Firearms legislation has been at the forefront of the consciousness of Australian legislators since 1996. The first measures, such as the buy-back scheme introduced by John Howard, have now proceeded to the stage where all Australians accept the need to embrace firearms legislation and to recognise the importance of reducing the number and availability of firearms in the community. This legislation is significant because it continues on from those measures and provides another example to the rest of the world of how to treat firearms offences and the use of firearms in the community. Clearly, we can never do enough in this regard.

The tragedy in Martin Place again brought to mind the obligation of Australians to look at ways to reduce access to illegal firearms and to send a message to the community about the use of firearms that are illegally obtained. The events in Parramatta, as referred to by the member for Seven Hills, also highlighted the need for continuing diligence in relation to the treatment of firearms in the community. As elected members in this place, we must do everything we can to ensure that the criminal penalties appropriately reflect community standards and that we have in place the legal framework to ensure the judiciary can appropriately punish those who aim to dodge the law. This is particularly relevant when it

comes to wheeling and dealing in illegal firearms. This bill is squarely targeted at reckless criminals who deliberately and maliciously use firearms to wreak havoc on our communities.

There are more than 860,000 registered firearms in New South Wales. According to NSW Police Force figures, in the 2014-15 financial year a total of 720 firearms were stolen in New South Wales and 60 of those were handguns. The theft of firearms is a major concern for the NSW Police Force and all thefts are thoroughly investigated. The NSW Police Force conducts a risk-based audit and compliance program, helping gun owners to understand the value and importance of safe storage arrangements to reduce opportunistic thefts. Thanks to this bill we now we have penalties specifically targeted at stolen firearms. It is important to reiterate the comments of my colleagues that this bill is not directed at the law-abiding licensed firearm holders. The Government recognises that the majority of those people adhere to the strict requirements of the New South Wales firearms legislation.

In New South Wales we have a strict regulatory framework for firearms, which is governed by the Firearms Act 1996 and the Firearms Regulation 2006 and underpinned by the 1996 National Firearms Agreement. The provisions of this legislation impose strict requirements and obligations on licensed firearm holders to use their firearms responsibly and only for the reasons for which the licence was granted such as primary production or sports shooting. Similarly, most firearms licensees fully cooperate with police in relation to routine safe storage inspections. These inspections are fundamental to ensuring that firearms are appropriately stored and not easily accessible or at risk of theft.

For the most part, this State has a robust licensing framework. Most licensed firearm holders appreciate the privilege and responsibility of holding a firearms licence. I am pleased to say that the majority of licensed firearm owners adhere to our legislative framework and the Government is appreciative of their cooperation. Licensed gun owners are aware that the legislative framework is aimed at ensuring that firearms do not end up in the wrong hands. I acknowledge the work of the NSW Police Force's Firearms Registry, which does a fantastic job in ensuring that licensed firearms owners are complying with the Act and regulations. The Government's appreciation is reflected in the \$5 million it has provided to the registry to upgrade its information technology systems and infrastructure. I understand that work is underway to automate some of the registry's processes and to make it easier for licensed firearm owners to interact with the registry.

The Government is confident that the majority of firearms licensees are law-abiding citizens of this State. The bill is not directed at those people. Rather, it is aimed at those individuals who purposely misuse firearms, evade the law or at least attempt to, and have no regard for the damage their reckless and malicious acts cause the community. I will now speak to the Firearms Prohibition Orders. Since coming to office, this Government has introduced laws to create new search powers and restrictions and offences to apply to people who are issued a Firearms Prohibition Order by the police. New offences have been created for the illegal supply of a firearm or for giving possession of a firearm to unauthorised persons. Criminals may now be prosecuted for attempting to commit a firearms offence, even if they do not succeed. It has also been made easier for police to enter and search premises that are frequented by serious criminals, such as a gang clubhouse.

I am advised that the police have been using these new powers successfully and have issued more than 850 Firearms Prohibition Orders since the new laws came into effect. Of these, 240 have been served on members of outlaw motorcycle gangs. Further Firearms Prohibition Orders have been approved and are ready to be served. In addition, local police are supported by specialist policing squads, Talon and Raptor, which are aimed at driving down gun and organised crime. As at 4 October 2015, Operation Talon had made 1,182 arrests, laid 1,654 charges, conducted 3,814 person searches and 1,728 vehicle searches, issued 277 Firearms Prohibition Orders, and seized 25 firearms and 7 replica firearms. As at 31 August 2015, Strike Force Raptor had arrested 3,074 people, laid 7,014 charges, seized over \$4.4 million in cash and assets, made numerous drug seizures worth more than \$15 million and, most importantly for this debate, seized 957 firearms.

In acknowledging this work by the New South Wales police, in March this year the Government committed to bolstering the NSW Police Force. As part of this commitment the firearms and organised crime-related squads will expand by 70 police officers. These officers will specifically target organised crime, so more criminals involved in the illegal manufacture, trafficking, importation and possession of firearms will be prosecuted. This legislation and the work that has been done by the NSW Police Force, as has been recognised by the Opposition, are worthy of our support. We congratulate the NSW Police Force and admire the work they do. I know that the members of my community would be encouraged by this legislation. I commend the bills to the House.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) [11.44 a.m.]: I support the Firearms and Weapons Prohibition Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and cognate bill, the Security Industry Amendment (Regulation of Training Organisations) Bill 2015. The amendments to the Firearms Act and the Weapons Prohibition Act give effect to the recommendations of the joint Commonwealth and New South Wales Martin Place siege review and should be supported. It is too easy to illegally access firearms, as Man Monis and Farhad Jabar did. Since this Government was elected there have been 523 shootings in New South Wales, and 40 of those were fatalities. This year there have been 76 shootings.

The amendments in the bill enable the Commissioner of Police to consider spent convictions when dealing with applications for firearm licences and permits and to increase the maximum penalty for certain offences concerning pistols, prohibited firearms, shortened firearms or converted firearms from 10 to 14 years. The amendments also increase the maximum penalty for the offence of defacing or altering numbers, letters or identification marks on firearms or firearm barrels, or possessing such a defaced or altered firearm or firearm barrel, from five years imprisonment to 14 years. They also create a new offence of using, supplying or acquiring such defaced firearms or giving possession of them to another person and an offence of supplying, acquiring or possessing defaced firearm parts or giving possession of such parts to another person.

They create a new offence of possessing digital blueprints for the manufacture of firearms on 3D printers or electronic milling machines and a new offence of using, supplying, acquiring or possessing a stolen firearm or firearm part or giving possession of a stolen firearm or firearm part to another person. These reforms will go some way to restricting the proliferation of illegal weapons in New South Wales. The money that can be made from the distribution of illegal weapons is enormous, so the penalties have to provide a strong disincentive to their distribution. Some would say that cracking down on illegal weapons will not be effective as those weapons will be sourced elsewhere. However, I note that the seizure of 18 illegal weapons and thousands of rounds of ammunition from homes in my electorate and nearby in April 2014 did coincide with the start of a noticeable local decline in gun crime.

During the last term of government, Merrylands was the epicentre of gun crime in New South Wales, the drive-by capital, and Guildford and Granville were not far behind. There were 24 shootings in Merrylands in the last term of government. However, there has not been any in that suburb since August 2014 and only two in the electorate since March—two too many. I do not take any credit for the reduction in local gun crime; it is largely due to the hard work of the police. I do note that my predecessor, at the height of the spate of local drive-by shootings, said that it was just criminals shooting at criminals and no-one need be concerned. He did not consider the terrified people who had been incorrectly targeted because the shooters had the wrong address or were unaware that their targets had moved out and a new family had moved in; he had no regard for the heartbroken families of the deceased, even if they were well aware that their deceased family member was not squeaky clean.

My predecessor also said nothing when Graeme Hunt, an entirely innocent third party, was shot in the spine when he went to investigate an argument in the street outside his Merrylands home in March last year. Graeme is now a paraplegic and has gone from being a very successful truck driver earning a six-figure salary to life in a wheelchair. Due to this Government's callous changes to compensation for victims of crime, Graeme is entitled to a maximum of \$60,000. It is hardly enough to modify his home for a wheelchair, if he wanted to remain there after his lengthy rehabilitation. Graeme is a great bloke and his

very large circle of friends rallied around to help him. Arthur Laundy kindly organised a fundraiser for him at one of his pubs, which raised more than \$20,000.

There are thousands of illegal weapons in Australia. We have been very lucky that the gun amnesty following the Port Arthur massacre and the restrictions on automatic weapons were successful. Since the measures were introduced, we have not had a mass shooting like Port Arthur and our culture of gun ownership has changed. Also, we are safer with legal guns stored in safes. But the overwhelming majority of weapons were surrendered by licenced shooters because the firearms were no longer legal or were not used. Some members have called for a new gun amnesty to solve the problem of illegal weapons and drive-by shootings in Western Sydney. This will not work. The weapons that are held illegally cost a lot to buy and their resale value is worth a considerable amount. To hand them in for market value is not an incentive. If someone no longer wants an illegal weapon they will onsell.

The previous amnesty worked because the weapons collected were no longer legal or no longer needed by licensed owners and the owners were happy to comply with the law. It seems the majority of illegal weapons that are seized are firearms that are legal for licenced users, in appropriate circumstances and when appropriately stored, or they may have been stolen and modified to prevent their later identification. I particularly welcome the amendment to the Weapons Prohibition Act to create a new offence of producing digital blueprints for the manufacture of weapons using 3D printers. These 3D printers are becoming increasingly prolific and are very useful in manufacturing, but they present people the opportunity to build parts for illegal weapons.

I also welcome the Security Industry Amendment Bill. It is important that the NSW Police Force oversees the registered training organisations that offer security industry training in New South Wales. For that reason, it is necessary for these courses to be exempt from Commonwealth regulation of vocational training organisations and courses. The NSW Police Force needs clarity and certainty about its powers to regulate and audit training companies to ensure quality training. This provision is supported by the Commonwealth. There is a clear incentive for criminals to access weapons from security companies, and entirely inappropriate people have held security licences in New South Wales. Unfortunately, illegal weapons have been stolen from security companies. So it is important that civilians who are authorised to carry weapons are well trained to ensure they cannot be easily disarmed and that security companies and training organisations store their weapons securely.

Some people say that we should ban firearms altogether and will point to jurisdictions like the United Kingdom where beat police do not carry guns. In Australia, many people who are licenced shooters enjoy nothing more than shooting clay pigeons in a controlled environment and farmers occasionally need guns to put down sick or injured stock. It is far more humane, not to mention cheaper, to shoot a dying animal than to carry it into town to be euthanised by a vet. These reforms will not and cannot stop the proliferation of illegal weapons in New South Wales but they provide clarity for police and greater disincentives to disseminate or purchase illegal weapons. For that reason, the bills should be supported.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [11.52 a.m.]: I speak to the Firearms and Weapons Prohibition Legislation Amendment Bill 2015, which amends the Firearms Act 1996, and the Weapons Prohibition Act 1998, which gives effect to the recommendations of the Martin Place siege joint review report to strengthen laws relating to illegal firearms. The aim of these bills is to improve public safety and increase penalties for the possession, use or supply of illegal firearms. The Martin Place Siege: Joint Commonwealth-New South Wales review made recommendations regarding firearms and included an update on the technical elements of the National Firearms Agreement, stating that States and Territories should give further consideration to measures to deal with illegal firearms. The provisions contained in this bill target illegal firearms.

The bill contains a number of changes, amendments or additions. They relate to the creation of a new possessions offence under the Firearms Act; defaced firearms; and that spent convictions will now

be considered for applicants of a firearms permit or licence. This bill contains increased penalties from 10 years to 14 years for certain firearm offences. It creates a new offence in relation to the manufacture of firearms and prohibited weapons on 3D printers. I acknowledge the tragedy that unfolded in Martin Place on 16 December last year. I extend my condolences to the family and friends of the two innocent members of our community who lost their lives during that siege. The events that day gripped the nation and shocked and distressed each and every one of us. It is something that I will never forget. The Government acknowledges this tragedy as an act of criminal recklessness, which has had a huge impact on the community. The Government has taken measures to deter those who want to obtain illegal firearms and wreak havoc on our communities.

In accepting the recommendations of the joint New South Wales and Commonwealth Martin Place siege review, the New South Wales Government went one step further and committed to reducing the number of illegal firearms in the community. This bill is a reflection of that commitment. The message is that anyone who uses, handles, possesses or supplies illegal firearms will be dealt with harshly by the law in this State. The bill increases the maximum penalty of 10 years to 14 years imprisonment for a number of existing firearms offences, including converting, defacing, altering or shortening and possessing or supplying a firearm. That change is certainly welcomed by me and my community.

The New South Wales Government is on the front foot when it comes to emerging technologies. An act that threatens the safety of our communities could lead to a devastating outcome. We are the first jurisdiction in Australia to outlaw the possession of digital blueprints for the manufacture of firearms and weapons on 3D printers. The Government has banned the use of digital blueprints in the Firearms Act and the Weapons Prohibition Act for the production of firearms using a 3D printer to ensure that we capture and criminalise a range of items that could lead to a devastating outcome. I believe we are the first of any State or Territory to do so.

It is well established that stolen firearms often end up in the wrong hands, and this bill introduces new offences for stolen firearms. The bill provides that a person must not supply, acquire or possess a stolen firearm or firearms or give same to another person. In keeping with consistency, this offence will also attract a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment. The majority of licensed firearm holders operate within strict legislative framework for owning and using a firearm in New South Wales. I acknowledge that it is a great privilege to hold a firearms licence but it also comes with a great deal of responsibility. The member for Granville gave examples about a genuine need for a firearm, particularly on farmlands. Given the level of responsibility, the Government wants the Commissioner of Police or his delegate to be fully equipped with information about an applicant for a firearms licence.

This bill will allow spent convictions to be considered as part of the determination of processing for the issuing of firearms. This is a common-sense approach and one that is certainly overdue. In issuing a firearm permit or licence the Commissioner of Police must be satisfied that, among other things, the applicant is a fit and proper person and can be trusted to possess a firearm without posing a threat to public safety. The commissioner can also have regard to a range of matters when assessing a person's suitability for a firearm licence or permit. This includes a person's prior criminal conviction or an apprehended violence order.

The inclusion of spent convictions in the range of matters that can be considered will improve the rigour of the assessment process. I welcome those amendments to this bill. I am proud to be part of a Government that is committed to ensuring the safety of its citizens and not afraid to introduce harsher penalties for those who wish to skirt the law. We want to empower the judiciary to be able to hand down tougher sanctions. I am confident this bill provides for that. As I mentioned before, part of the bill will increase the penalty for a number of firearm offences to 14 years imprisonment. I will outline those offences for *Hansard*.

The bill will amend key firearms offences to increase the maximum penalties from 10 years to 14 years imprisonment for the possession, use, supply or acquisition, of a firearm. These include: in new

section 36, the supply, acquisition, possession or use of an unregistered firearm; in new section 50, the acquisition of firearms without a licence or permit; in section 50AA, the acquisition of firearm parts without a licence or permit; in new section 51BA, the restrictions on the supply of firearm parts; and in new section 62, the offence of shortening of firearms. The list goes on. The amendments in the bill are overdue and they make sense. I commend the Minister and his staff for these bills. I commend these bills to the House.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): I welcome to the gallery members of the Shoalhaven Heads Red Cross, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary, and member for Kiama.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [12.01 p.m.]: I speak in debate on the Firearms and Weapons Prohibition Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and cognate Security Industry Amendment (Regulation of Training Organisations) Bill 2015. As I understand it, as the proud representative of the electorate of Cessnock my area has the highest number of licensed firearm owners in any State electorate. There are some 4,400 registered firearms owners in the Cessnock electorate. If we assume that each of them owns two or three firearms there are possibly 10,000 firearms in my area. Another member mentioned that there are 180,000 registered firearms in the State. That being the case, any regulation or amendment regarding firearms is a matter of extreme importance and relevance to the person representing the Cessnock electorate in this House.

By and large the amendments in this legislation, which are essentially to recognise the use of 3D computer printers and to increase penalties for people holding firearms unlawfully, are good changes. They are good amendments. We can know with strength, trust and faith that any person who owns a firearm falls into one of two categories: law-abiding, honest and good; or knowingly holding a firearm that they should not hold. I commend, support and endorse the law-abiding citizens who own their firearms but are at times vilified in the media and in parliaments for being firearms owners. The 4,400 licensed gun owners who I represent are good people. They own their guns for the purposes of sport and/or because they own properties and need guns for various reasons that are normally to do with animals and getting rid of unwanted pests.

We should not vilify those people, because they are doing the right thing. I suggest that most gun crime across New South Wales and Australia is generally caused by illegal guns in the possession of unlicensed owners. I appreciate that the amendments in the bill speak to that specifically and extend the potential term of imprisonment for people who hold guns unlawfully. We should make no mistake: People who know that their firearm is illegal or unlawful because they do not have the correct licence or necessary registration know that they are criminals before they use their firearm. Those people need to be dealt with incredibly harshly and I support all of the amendments that relate to that issue.

But we should not think that the issue of firearms is above politics. The member for Blacktown sits on my side of the Chamber. In August 2013 the member for Blacktown as Leader of the Opposition introduced into this Parliament the idea of a prohibition order to give police extra powers to search persons or the homes of persons who had been convicted of gun crime. The politics at the time meant that we were unable to get that passed from opposition. When you are in government it is almost impossible to accept an idea from the Opposition regardless of whether it is a good, great or wonderful idea—if it is coming from the Opposition it must be wrong. Although we sometimes experience politics in the implementation of firearms legislation, I am happy today that the New South Wales Opposition will support these bills because the amendments they contain are good. They are unlike the amendments in the 2012 ammunition bill, which were widely criticised by the community as being a little bit clumsy.

That issue of clumsiness brings me to new sections 10 and 30 of this bill. I reiterate that we will not oppose the bill, but there is something a little bit clumsy and dangerous about those sections. Essentially the sections will make amendments so that section 12 of the Criminal Records Act 1991 will not apply in relation to an application for a firearms licence. All power will be given over to the Commissioner of Police to make an assessment about whether a person is fit and proper if they have a

spent conviction for what would otherwise be deemed a minor offence. Let us imagine, for example, that someone gets into a fight at a pub and has a conviction for assault. Or let us imagine that somebody is charged with driving under the influence [DUI]. Let us now imagine that either of those persons—or they might be the same person—later acquires a farm or a property. This is an interesting point for The Nationals.

A person who has a DUI charge or been charged for a fight in a pub may then become a farm owner, or get a job on a farm, or be given the opportunity to manage a farm. In order to do that work effectively that person might need to obtain a gun licence. Under this legislation the decision about whether they are a fit and proper person will come down to the Commissioner of Police. What a responsibility that is, especially when the commissioner will not be given any particular guidance. This legislation or a regulation could give the commissioner some real guidance as to what things to deem more serious and what things to deem less serious. If that power is vested entirely in the Commissioner of Police without any indication from this place about how to exercise that function I fear that all responsibility will land on the commissioner of the day.

Let us imagine, for example, that the Commissioner of Police of the day makes an assessment of somebody who has a driving under the influence charge or who has had a fight in a pub somewhere and has a spent conviction and deems them to be fit and proper and so approves them to have a gun licence. What if a crime is then committed by that same person with that same gun under that same licence granted by the commissioner? What a massive responsibility for that commissioner. They have made the decision about that person's fitness without any guidance from this place. What a massive responsibility that is if something goes wrong after the commissioner has made a subjective judgement about the suitability of that person.

In supporting this bill I acknowledge that sometimes the legislation brought into this place by the Government dealing with firearms and ammunition is a bit clumsy. To that end, I come back to the point made by previous speakers in this debate: This particular bill was introduced into the House on Tuesday afternoon—that is, less than 48 hours ago—and is now being debated and finalised here this morning. This is not a good way to go about finalising legislation. One wonders why the urgency, given that we already have good and strong legislation in New South Wales; some of the strongest in the nation right now, as was recognised by the Minister in his second reading speech. I have no problem with extending the imprisonment of people who have illegal and unlawful firearms. But why do we need to rush this legislation through, given there might be some clumsiness in this bill that could otherwise have been dealt with by talking more with stakeholders?

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Chris Patterson and set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

STATE REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 27 October 2015.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) [12.12 p.m.]: I speak on the State Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. I lead for the Opposition and note from the outset that the Opposition will not be opposing the bill. This bill seeks to make a number of small and minor amendments to existing legislation. The Minister referred in his second reading speech to this bill as being a "significant reform" of existing legislation. Rather, I would describe this bill more accurately as "tinkering around the edges". This is exactly what it should do. Indeed, in the instance of the amendment to the Duties Act, for the sake of allowing a duties exemption to clubs, the Government is now tidying up a mess that it created in 2012. It is hardly sweeping, significant reform when it is a matter of fixing up one's own mess.

The State Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 seeks to do five key things. Firstly, it extends exemptions from duty on transactions relating to amalgamations of registered clubs and de-amalgamation of registered clubs and related transfers of club premises and car parks under schedule 1 to the bill, Amendment of Duties Act 1997 No.123. Secondly, it updates references to stock exchanges so that concessions applicable to other stock exchanges will apply in the case of entities or securities listed or quoted on the London Stock Exchange, including the Alternative Investment Market [AIM], and the New York Stock Exchange. This again is under schedule 1 to the bill, Amendment of Duties Act 1997 No. 123.

Thirdly, the bill will modernise procedures for nomination of persons in charge of vehicles or vessels who have committed offences by persons who would otherwise be responsible for the offences and to make other amendments relating to nominations. This is under schedule 2 to the bill, Amendment of Fines Act 1996 No. 99 and schedule 3, Amendment of Roads Transport Act 2013 No. 18. Fourthly, the bill will enable refunds, in cases of hardship, of payments under garnishee orders issued against fine defaulters. This is under schedule 3, Amendment of Fines Act 1996 No. 99. Finally, the bill clarifies the status of calculations of self-assessed tax liability by the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue. This is a minor amendment under schedule 4, Amendment of Taxation Administration Act 1996 No. 97. I will address these five matters in order.

As noted in the Minister's second reading speech, the duty exemption provided for clubs has been in place for some years. It is specifically for the purpose of amalgamations. The rationale behind this was that clubs provide such a broad and encompassing service to their communities that the New South Wales Government can and should assist by waiving their duty tax during processes of amalgamation. It is a reality that amalgamations are more and more frequent in the world of clubs these days, as the smaller neighbourhood clubs struggle to survive in our modern society. Often, the only lifeline available to small clubs is to seek amalgamation with a larger and wealthier club that can provide an injection of funds. Consequently the local community can continue to receive the benefits of having a local club.

In 2012, during the process of amending the Registered Clubs Act 1976, this Government took the step, and I quote from the Minister's second reading speech, of "requiring clubs to de-amalgamate prior to an amalgamation". Consequently, while the duty exemption was in place for an amalgamation, their de-amalgamation—in fact they were forced to de-amalgamate—was not covered by the duty exemption. This bill seeks to address that. Once this bill is enacted, clubs will enjoy a legislated duty exemption during both the amalgamation and de-amalgamation process. They enjoy bipartisan support on this front.

What is worthy of recognition though with this duty exemption is the size and scale of the cost to the New South Wales budget. I do not seek to object to the proposal; it will simply mean that, in real terms, we are entitled to understand the estimated value of the exemption that is provided to the clubs industry each year by way of duty exemption. While I appreciate that this figure would vary from year to year, and often the exact value of a property undergoing amalgamation or de-amalgamation might not be pursued with great vigour, I hope that the Minister for Finance, Services and Property will be able to articulate a reasonably accurate annual estimate of the size of the exemption or "subsidy" that is provided to clubs across New South Wales by way of this exemption.

The second purpose of this bill is to simply clarify within the definitions of the Duties Act 1997 the presence of the London Stock Exchange and the New York Stock Exchange. This is necessary simply because the London and New York stock exchanges have ceased to be members of the World Federation of Exchanges. Currently, in the Duties Act 1997 definitions of listed companies, listed trusts and other listings there is direct reference to the Australian Stock Exchange, the New Zealand Stock Exchange and the World Federation of Exchanges. When they were members, the London and New York stock exchanges were captured by the World Federation of Exchanges definition. That is no longer the case as they are no longer members and this is simply an adjustment to the definitions of the existing Act. It is most certainly not a "significant reform" from this Government, as was claimed by the Minister in his

second reading speech.

The third change proposed by this amendment bill is a simple adjustment to an existing Act. Again, it is enacting a common-sense adjustment of an Act to better reflect the modern world. This change will make perfect sense to registered owners of vehicles who are currently subject to an issued fine in instances where a car make or model and numberplate are identifiable for indiscretions such as speeding, parking or driving through a red light. If the registered owner was not the driver at the time the offence was committed then he or she has the option to nominate who the actual driver of the vehicle was. Currently, that is done by way of a written and signed statutory declaration. The change proposed in this bill will make it possible for a registered vehicle owner to nominate the responsible driver by way of electronic lodgement. To allow for this modernisation, changes will be required to the Road Transport Act 2013 and the Fines Act 1996.

Identification and verification will be important elements of this change; this is accounted for. To reinforce to registered owners that a false or misleading nomination of another driver is a serious offence—for example, if someone was getting low in points on their licence—penalties for making a false claim will double from \$5,500 to \$11,000 for individuals; and from \$11,000 to \$22,000 for corporations. In the event that a matter goes before a court, statutory declarations will be required to be tendered in writing to the court. The fourth change in this bill appears to be an oddly compassionate one from this Government. The five years of this Government could be described as many things, including corrupt, dysfunctional, obnoxious, self-absorbed—

Mr Jonathan O'Dea: Point of order: It is clearly inappropriate to describe this Government or indeed people on this side of the House as corrupt. I ask the member to withdraw that comment.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! The member for Cessnock has been asked to withdraw that comment. Will he do so?

Mr CLAYTON BARR: No.

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! Calling anyone corrupt is unparliamentary. I request that the member for Cessnock withdraw the comment.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: I will withdraw the comment for the sake of the member for Davidson and the Assistant-Speaker. This is not the first time that I have been pulled up for referring to this Government as corrupt. Rather than corrupt, I might just refer to the number of experiences the Government has had in the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] and the number of Ministers who have been removed from office as a result of this conduct.

Mr Jonathan O'Dea: Point of order: The member is incorrectly suggesting that Ministers in this Government have been found to be corrupt. As a matter of fact, his assertion is incorrect. It is also inappropriate to cast such aspersions on members on this side of the House.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: I refer to their experiences in ICAC.

Mr Jonathan O'Dea: If you check your facts, you are factually incorrect.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: Have they or have they not had experiences in ICAC?

The ASSISTANT-SPEAKER (Mr Andrew Fraser): Order! I uphold the point of order. I ask the member for Cessnock to withdraw his remarks. If the member continues in this vein without addressing the leave of the bill I will ask him to resume his seat.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: I will withdraw my remarks. This Government could be described as many

things, including dysfunctional, self-absorbed, deceptive or morally bankrupt, but rarely would any of its actions be described as compassionate. In this instance though, credit where it is due. The fourth change in this bill allows for the Office of State Revenue [OSR] to make a refund if it becomes apparent that the enactment of a garnishee order has created a hardship. Each year the OSR uses garnishee orders to realise payment for some 500,000 fines. A garnishee order allows the OSR to source payment for fines directly from people's financial institutions. People are often dumbfounded when they go to their bank accounts and realise that the fine payment has been deducted. This can cause unscheduled and unpredicted financial hardship for some.

Once the change in this bill is implemented, a person who suffers financial hardship as a result of an OSR garnishee order can seek a refund, while still having liability to pay the fine. But what is not clear in the Minister's second reading speech, or in the wording of the bill, is the process and means by which a hardship claim can be made, how quickly it will be processed, and how quickly the funds might be returned to the person. The reality is that an unexpected disruption to people's bank accounts, in the hundreds of dollars, is an immediate and significant imposition. It can immediately leave them without money for food, petrol or other necessities. For this refund mechanism to be at all useful, the Minister will need to ensure that the process can be done quickly—indeed, very quickly, even within 24 hours. Perhaps in his speech in reply the Minister could offer an explanation of how the process will work.

Finally, the fifth amendment in this bill pertains to some regulations around time limits for the claiming of refunds for overpayment of payroll tax. As noted in the Minister's second reading speech, there are instances where a payroll tax overpayment is made as a result of a self-assessment which has overestimated business turnover and income. When the OSR performs an assessment, any subsequent potential for reassessment is limited to five years. However, in the majority of cases the OSR does not make an assessment and the taxpayer's self-assessment is accepted, as is the subsequent payment of payroll tax. The problem is that a five-year limit does not clearly apply in instances where the OSR does not make an assessment of the submitted self-assessment. This change will make it clear that the five-year limit applies in all instances.

The Minister referred to millions of dollars in refunds each year. I ask the Minister to give more specific details about the total value of refunds each year in his reply. I also ask the Minister to clarify how much of that refund total is within the five-year time limit and how much is outside it. More specifically, the Minister might clarify whether or not the revenue of the New South Wales Government will be better or worse off as a result of the changes in this bill. Interestingly, the Minister also mentioned the need for OSR to keep records for beyond five years without this amendment and clarification. I draw the Minister's attention to section 9 of the Tax Administration Act 1996, where there is clear and specific scope for reassessment well beyond the five-year limit under certain conditions and circumstances.

I hope that the appropriate records have been kept under those conditions and circumstances. I invite the Minister to clarify whether or not he intends any change to interpretation or activation of section 9 of the Tax Administration Act 1996 as a result of this amendment. On the whole there are seemingly benign and minor amendments at play in this bill. I encourage the Government to continue to make minor amendments to legislation so it can fix its own mess and stay abreast of modern technologies. I also encourage the Government to offer the highest possible level of transparency around any decision or adjustment to any piece of legislation that has a financial impact on the State's budget. The New South Wales Labor Opposition will not oppose this bill.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [12.28 p.m.]: I speak in debate on the State Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. In doing so, I will focus on the forward-thinking initiative that provides for the electronic nomination of an offender. The Minister and shadow Minister have outlined a range of initiatives contained in the bill. I note that the shadow Minister acknowledged how compassionate this Government is. I take pride in being part of a compassionate government.

Mr Clayton Barr: And corrupt.

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA: I acknowledge that interjection from the shadow Minister. It is disgraceful. His behaviour in this Chamber today has been disgraceful. Normally he is a decent man. He has not lived up to his reputation on the floor of the House today. He has flouted the ruling of the Chair. His interjection is a reflection on him. There has been no finding of corruption against any member on this side of the House. In contrast, the Independent Commission Against Corruption found a number of former Labor ministers with whom the member for Cessnock used to serve in this place to be corrupt.

If the member wants to reopen old wounds, which the Labor Party has tried to heal under the current leadership, he may do so. I acknowledge that Luke Foley is a decent man who is trying to move on from the proven corrupt record of Labor. If the member for Cessnock wants to dredge up erroneous arguments, that will come back on Labor in spades. Labor members ought to tell that errant shadow Minister to pull his head in and focus on proper matters. I acknowledge that, in speaking on this bill, the shadow Minister recognised the Government's compassion. That is a good thing.

I turn to the existing legislation. I note that the owner of a vehicle is considered the person responsible for traffic and parking offences recorded on camera. If the owner of the vehicle is not the offender, they may nominate the offender by lodging a statutory declaration. That is a time-consuming process requiring a form to be filled in, often in long hand, witnessed by an acceptable person, usually a Justice of the Peace, and then sent by mail to the Office of State Revenue. Currently, where a vehicle is owned by a corporation, the nomination process can be lodged electronically. Why prevent everyday drivers from using the same process? This legislation makes the electronic process available to individuals. It reflects the progressive thinking of a government that is moving with the times.

Forward-thinking governments and businesses around the world are increasingly adopting the advantages provided by the electronic age. The Australian Taxation Office is increasingly using emails and SMS messaging to communicate with clients. Global financial markets have been revolutionised through the introduction of e-trading. Electronic communication is used across the community. This bill demonstrates the New South Wales Government's willingness to adapt to the information technology revolution and harness the many advantages it provides. Who knows; we might even see electronic voting in this Chamber one day—or maybe not.

The electronic transfer of information is almost instantaneous, unlike traditional mail, which takes at least one business day to arrive. Equally, a response to electronic communications can be provided in moments. In addition to saving time, the electronic lodgement of a nomination is more cost effective. Once electronic networks are established, the transfer of information is far cheaper than sending and receiving paper statutory declarations by mail. Misplaced or misfiled traditional mail can have far-reaching consequences for individuals facing an undeserved fine. The audit trail for electronic communications is clearer and more reliable.

The Office of State Revenue receives more than 350,000 nomination notices annually. Imagine how much space it takes to file and store 350,000 such sets of documentation every year. Databases provide inexpensive storage compared to filing paper copies in an array of expensive filing cabinets or other storage facilities. The electronic transfer of information also provides a system of ready recall that cannot be matched by a paper system. Electronic details can be made readily available in more than one location, overcoming the limitations imposed by having paper records in one location.

There are many benefits to the new process. The electronic lodgement of nomination notices by individuals provides increased convenience. The new process will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through a Service NSW mobile app, and the Service NSW and Office of State Revenue websites. I have focused on only one aspect of the bill, but it includes many other worthwhile changes, one of which is the doubling of the maximum penalty for those found guilty of making a false nomination. The increased penalty highlights how seriously the New South Wales Government views the actions of those wishing to avoid liability for an offence, especially where a loss of demerit points is involved. I

commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by Mr Chris Patterson and set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

GAMING AND LIQUOR ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing) [12.34 p.m.], in reply: I thank the members for Strathfield, Keira, Balmain, Sydney, Kiama, Holsworthy, Camden and Oatley for their contributions to debate on the Gaming and Liquor Administration Amendment Bill 2015. The measures contained in the bill will improve the regulatory structures for the liquor and gaming sectors through the establishment of an integrated regulator, Liquor and Gaming NSW, within the Department of Justice. It has been made clear from the outset that the bill does not encroach upon the policy settings applying to the liquor and gaming sectors. No-one can argue against the Government's tough stance on liquor and gaming policy. Just this year the Royal Hotel in Temora was shut down for 28 days, as were two bottle shops, one in Bondi and one in Terrigal. For the first time, two individuals were banned for life from holding a liquor licence.

These policy settings, which include the measures applying to the Sydney central business district and Kings Cross precincts, the 10.00 p.m. restriction on takeaway liquor sales and the three strikes disciplinary scheme, are not impacted by this bill. In 2016 industry and community stakeholders will have the opportunity to engage with government on a number of these policy settings as part of the scheduled statutory reviews of the 1.30 a.m. lockout, the 3.00 a.m. last drinks restriction and the three strikes scheme. Separately, the Government has commenced stage one of the review of the 10.00 p.m. restriction on takeaway liquor sales in regional areas. I note the concerns that were raised by the member for Kiama. Stage two of the review will be undertaken in 2016 and will focus on the impact of this restriction in metropolitan areas. Over the past 12 months the need for regulatory reform in the liquor and gaming sectors has been reinforced by the lengthy delays in determining licensing proposals and disciplinary matters.

Some disciplinary matters have taken more than 12 months to be determined, which is at odds with the Government's objective of minimising alcohol and gambling related harm, and ensuring that the sectors operate responsibly and in line with community expectations. In one case the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority took more than a year to consider a disciplinary complaint taken against a registered club. Action had been taken against the club after it had ceased trading. It had no premises and had not provided alternative premises for its members, yet continued to pay a salary of close to \$400,000 to the club secretary. The level of regulatory duplication and overlap that exists between the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing and the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority causes delay and frustration for stakeholders and community groups. It has the potential to undermine the Government's policy settings in regulating the liquor and gaming sectors and, as a result, undermine public safety.

The Gaming and Liquor Administration Amendment Bill 2015 strikes an appropriate balance by retaining the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority to determine contentious licensing proposals and disciplinary matters, with Liquor and Gaming NSW responsible for compliance enforcement, delegated decision-making of routine matters and the provision of policy support to the Government. I note that Opposition members have claimed there has been little to no consultation on this bill. That is entirely incorrect. The Government has consulted widely with community groups including the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education [FARE], the NSW ACT Alcohol Policy Alliance [NAAPA], the Police Association of NSW, medical groups and the Thomas Kelly Foundation. It has also consulted with ILGA regarding its independence and continued importance.

The bill enables certain licensing decisions to be subject to a merit review, which will provide a low-cost review mechanism that is not currently available to applicants and other parties. The Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority will be able to review certain delegated decisions made by Liquor and Gaming NSW, such as the grant of a new licence for a restaurant, with delegated decisions that can be reviewed by the authority to be prescribed by regulation. The bill will also enable the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal [NCAT] to review contentious licensing proposals determined by the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority, such as an application for a hotel licence or a packaged liquor licence—something that does not exist currently.

The decisions for which a merit review can be sought by NCAT will also be prescribed by regulation. NCAT will be able to review a decision made by the authority based on the material that was before the authority at the time its decision was made; in other words, a merits-based review. For instance, in the case of a new hotel licence, NCAT will be required to consider whether the statutory test that the overall social impact of the licence will not be detrimental to the wellbeing of the local or broader community has been met. Enabling NCAT to review certain decisions made by the authority is consistent with the Government's objective of providing an informal and low cost review mechanism. Enabling NCAT to conduct a merit review of contentious licensing decisions made by the authority is also consistent with current arrangements whereby a review can be sought by NCAT of certain disciplinary decisions made by the authority.

This includes the imposition of a third strike and issuing a long-term banning order that applies to licensed premises in the Sydney central business district and Kings Cross precincts. Although the bill enables ministerial directions to be issued to the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority, these directions will be limited to administrative arrangements to improve the timeliness and transparency of its decision-making. These ministerial directions will not affect the authority's status as an independent decision-maker, nor will they encroach upon the authority's functions in determining licensing proposals and disciplinary matters. This is consistent with ministerial directions of an administrative nature issued to statutory bodies such as the ministerial directions issued to the NSW Food Authority under the Food Act.

The bill also amends the Casino Control Act 1992 to reflect the integrated approach to compliance and enforcement across the liquor, gaming, registered club and casino sectors by making the Secretary of the Department of Justice responsible for compliance and enforcement at the casino. The bill also provides the Secretary the same standing as the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Commissioner of Police and the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority to prosecute offences under the Casino Control Act. Again I can confirm that the bill will not encroach upon the Government's policy settings for the liquor and gaming sectors, with several policy reforms, such as the 1.30 a.m. lockout and the 3.00 a.m. cease liquor service, to undergo a statutory review in 2016.

The New South Wales Liberals and Nationals Government recognises that the current liquor and gaming regulatory structures are not serving the people of New South Wales in the way they should, nor are they supporting the Government's policy settings to reduce alcohol and gambling-related harm. The bill strikes an appropriate balance by retaining the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority as an independent decision-maker for contentious matters while introducing reforms that will improve the transparency, accountability and timeliness of regulatory decision-making. I commend the bill to the House.

Question—That this bill be now read a second time—put.

The House divided.

Ayes, 47

Mr Anderson
Mr Aplin
Mr Ayres
Mr Barilaro
Ms Berejiklian
Mr Brookes
Mr Conolly
Mr Constance
Mr Coure
Mr Crouch
Mrs Davies
Mr Dominello
Mr Elliott
Mr Fraser
Mr Gee
Mr George

Ms Gibbons
Ms Goward
Mr Grant
Mr Gulaptis
Mr Henskens
Mr Humphries
Mr Johnsen
Mr Kean
Mr Maguire
Mr Marshall
Mr Notley-Smith
Mr O'Dea
Mrs Pavey
Mr Perrottet
Ms Petinos
Mr Piccoli

Mr Roberts
Mr Rowell
Mr Sidoti
Mrs Skinner
Mr Speakman
Mr Stokes
Mr Taylor
Mr Toole
Mr Tudehope
Ms Upton
Mr Ward
Mr Williams
Mrs Williams
Tellers,
Mr Bromhead
Mr Patterson

Noes, 35

Ms Aitchison
Mr Atalla
Mr Barr
Ms Burney
Ms Car
Ms Catley
Mr Chanthivong
Mr Crakanthorp
Mr Daley
Mr Dib
Ms Finn
Mr Foley

Mr Greenwich
Mr Harris
Ms Hay
Ms Haylen
Ms Hornery
Mr Kamper
Ms Leong
Mr Lynch
Dr McDermott
Ms McKay
Mr Mehan
Ms Mihailuk

Mr Minns
Mr Park
Mr Parker
Mr Robertson
Ms K. Smith
Ms T. F. Smith
Ms Washington
Ms Watson
Mr Zangari
Tellers,
Mr Lalich
Mr Warren

Pairs

Mr Baird
Ms Hodgkinson
Dr Lee

Ms Doyle
Ms Harrison
Mr Hoenig

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Mr. Troy Grant agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council with a message seeking its concurrence in the bill.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Government Business

Motion by Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS agreed to:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to permit Government Business to take precedence of the Committee Reports (Take-Note Debate).

STATUTE LAW (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL (NO. 2) 2015

Bill received from the Legislative Council, introduced and read a first time.

Second reading set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! Before the Clerk reads out the next order of business, I remind members that Standing Order 54 requires all members in the Chamber to be either seated or to remove themselves from the Chamber. Members who do not have business should remove themselves from the Chamber.

FIREARMS AND WEAPONS PROHIBITION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015

SECURITY INDUSTRY AMENDMENT (REGULATION OF TRAINING ORGANISATIONS) BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr TROY GRANT (Dubbo—Deputy Premier, Minister for Justice and Police, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Racing) [12.55 p.m.], in reply: I speak in reply on the Firearms and Weapons Prohibition Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and the cognate Security Industry Amendment Bill (Regulation of Training Organisations) Bill 2015. I thank the members for Seven Hills, Strathfield, Epping, Granville, Oatley, and Cessnock for their contributions to this important debate. The member for Strathfield thought the measures had been rushed through.

In response I note that the joint Martin Place Siege review was released on 22 February 2015 and the New South Wales and Commonwealth governments accepted the recommendations on the same day. The New South Wales Government made a further announcement on 28 August 2015 detailing the contents of the bills under consideration. The reforms before this place should not be a surprise to any member of this House. The member for Strathfield raised concerns about the provisions related to allowing the Commissioner of Police to consider spent convictions as part of licence or permit applications.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Lee Evans): Order! Members will cease having private conversations, or leave the Chamber.

Mr TROY GRANT: Further to the concerns raised by the member for Strathfield in relation to considering spent convictions as part of licence or permit applications, I acknowledge that there can be legitimate concerns in relation to these matters, and it can be difficult to balance public safety and the principles underpinning spent convictions. This issue may receive further attention in the Legislative

Council. I make it clear that the New South Wales Government will engage with all members in that place to ensure that we achieve the best outcomes for the community. I am pleased to support the bills. They go to the heart of the community's expectation of having tough penal sanctions in place for those who engage in gun crime and terrorise our communities. I commend the bills to the House.

Question—That these bills be now read a second time—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bills read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Mr Troy Grant agreed to:

That these bills be now read a third time.

Bills read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council with a message seeking its concurrence in the bills.

STATE REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2015

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 27 October 2015.

Mr JAMIE PARKER (Balmain) [1.00 p.m.]: On behalf of The Greens I briefly address the State Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2015. The bill contains many sensible provisions to which The Greens do not object. The Greens are concerned about the exemption of duties for clubs de-amalgamating. In our view, that is just another gift to the registered clubs industry. With the Gaming and Liquor Administration Amendment Bill 2015, which was debated earlier today, we saw the Government buckle to the gambling and liquor industries and now we see the fruits of lobbying by registered clubs with yet another gift to the registered clubs industry. With this bill the poker machine industry has received a gift of a \$300 million reduction in tax and the Government has made a significant decision which will only serve to enlarge clubs, particularly in low socio-economic areas, at the expense of local communities and problem gamblers.

This move was foreshadowed in the Government's 2014 Memorandum of Understanding with Clubs NSW and it builds upon the previous measures this Government has taken to make amalgamations and de-amalgamations more attractive. The forfeiture of machines was the first step. The concessions encourage the clubs industry to enlarge and gold plate profitable clubs, which generally are located in low socio-economic areas. As we know, the poorer a community the higher the loss per machine. The gaming machine industry is pushing for larger clubs in order to have greater gaming machine numbers. Research shows that the more machines in a club the more profitable is each machine. Recent statistics, which were outlined in an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, showed where poker machine profits come from—poorer suburbs.

This legislation will facilitate yet again the amalgamation of clubs, and an increase in the size of clubs will concentrate gambling losses in communities that can least afford it. For that reason, The Greens do not support this proposal. As we know, the forfeiture requirements for gaming machine entitlements transfer between amalgamated clubs, and amalgamated clubs retain all their poker machine entitlements when relocating from their old premises. That system has resulted in more poker machines increasingly ending up in larger clubs in the State's poorest areas. If clubs that have merged want to de-amalgamate, under the gaming and liquor legislation, which I have referred to, they are allowed to

transfer their poker machine entitlements to the other club rather than retain them. As we have seen, that leads to the conglomeration of poker machines in areas of the State where they will reap the largest profits and cause the greatest damage.

It is disappointing that we are giving another free kick to the poker machine and registered clubs industries. These devices of misery draw very significant revenues, 40 per cent of which, research shows, is from problem gamblers. We also know that concentrating these machines in larger clubs increases the amount of revenue per machine, so for the industry the best place to put a poker machine is in a poor community. My electorate of Balmain does not have a large concentration of poker machines. We know that clubs are desperate to get their poker machines into Western Sydney areas so they can increase gambling losses and their profits.

In the short time I have available, I express my concern about these provisions which will further advantage registered clubs. The exemption of duties for clubs de-amalgamating is a very regressive step. As I said, it will only serve to enlarge clubs at the expense of local communities and problem gamblers, particularly in low socio-economic areas. It is a great pity that the Government supports this because we know the devastating impact of gambling on our communities. The Greens have a very strong position on gambling. It is not gaming, as some people call it, it is gambling. The gambling losses in this State are breathtaking. The Government should be taking strong action to address this problem, not give a free kick to the gambling industry by allowing them to concentrate their machines in larger venues and generate more misery and poverty as a result.

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [1.04 p.m.]: The State Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 is an important amendment as it brings New South Wales in regards to realising traffic offenders, our tax administration system and our defining of duties into the twenty-first century. The bill is composed of amendments to the Fines Act, the Road Transport Act, the Tax Administration Act and the Duties Act. The amendments to the Fines Act and Road Transport Act are set to modernise the way in which an individual is nominated as being responsible for a traffic or parking offence that has been camera recorded.

The primary amendments allow for universal electronic nominations, the creation of consistent offences of making false nominations, an extension of the nomination time, and the introduction of the nomination process for motor vehicles caught littering. Further, the amendment to the Fines Act and Road Transport Act allows the Office of State Revenue to refund payments that it has received if the person will suffer as a result of lack of funds. The amendments to the Taxation Administration Act will ensure that refunds of tax that are made up to five years after the initial assessment will be noted from the date at which an assessment is made by the chief commissioner. The bill also provides amendments to the Duties Act which will allow for the provision for the de-amalgamation of clubs and for the London and New York Stock exchanges to gain marketable security duty exempt status, similar to other exchanges in the World Federation.

These amendments assure the public that we have more simplified and uniform laws across our fines system, taxation system and duties system. Firstly, the Government's amendment to the Fines Act and Road Transport Act streamlines the process by which an individual can nominate another person who is responsible for an offence regarding traffic or parking that has been caught on camera. When the Office of State Revenue provides a penalty notice of an offence that has been caught on camera, the office deems the operator of the vehicle guilty of the offence. The amendment will allow for universal electronic nominations, which seek to reverse the burden of operator onus offences. This will significantly streamline the nomination process and ensure that non-guilty parties will not be burdened with fines through an inability to transfer the liability to the guilty party.

Currently, only corporations are allowed to electronically nominate to transfer liabilities between parties while regular drivers have to sign a statutory declaration. The bill provides for an online transfer in order to allow for an easier method of removing the operator onus. Further, the bill seeks to create an

offence of making false nominations by having the Fines Act uniform with the Road Transport Act and in turn increasing the penalty. The amendments to the Fines Act and Road Transport Act will allow for an extension in nomination time so that New South Wales taxpayer funds are not wasted on matters that are pointlessly taken to court. The final amendment to these Acts is the inclusion of littering offences, as outlined in the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997, in the nomination process. This ensures that non-guilty parties will not be fined for acts that they have not committed.

The bill also amends the Taxation Administration Act 1996. Currently, there is an irregularity within the Act that allows self-assessed taxpayers to receive tax refunds that are more than five years old whereas it is up to five years for non-self-assessed taxpayers. The amendment will ensure that tax refunds up to five years after the primary assessment are noted from the date upon which the chief commissioner assessed the case. This amendment primarily redefines and clarifies the previous amendment and allows for a definitive start and end date to the tax refund period. Hopefully this will ensure that people across New South Wales do not fail to receive tax refunds, as there will be a new and clear start date. This amendment will be supported by the necessity for self-assessed taxpayers to hold onto tax receipts and payments for an indeterminate period. Self-assessed tax payers will be required to provide the necessary documentation to support claims of overpayment.

The bill also includes amendments to the Duties Act. The first amendment provides an exemption for transfers that occur as a result of the de-amalgamation of clubs as well as the transfer of club property, including the premises and car parks in association with amalgamations and de-amalgamations under the Registered Clubs Act 1976. As the Act stipulates that clubs should be exempt from duty, these exemptions should have been realised by clubs after the 2012 amendment to the Registered Clubs Act in relation to de-amalgamation. I am surprised that members opposite spoke against that. Clubs in our community do a fantastic job supporting sporting, cultural and not-for-profit groups. If my electorate of Wollondilly did not have the support of our local clubs, many community organisations and charities would not be able to function. In view of the limited time available to me and because my good friend the Minister for Finance, Services and Property is in the Chamber, I will conclude my remarks. I am pleased to support the bill and commend it to the House.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) [1.09 p.m.], in reply: I thank the member for Davidson, the member for Wollondilly, the member for Balmain and the member for Cessnock for their contributions to the debate. The New South Wales Government is committed to having best practice revenue laws. The State Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 contains amendments that reflect this. The amendments in the bill will modernise procedures that allow the registered owner of a motor vehicle or boat who receives a penalty notice for a traffic, parking or boating offence to nominate the actual offender who was in charge of the vehicle or boat when the offence was committed. The amendments will extend arrangements allowing companies to lodge electronic nominations so that they are universally available.

In the case of the garnishee orders issued by the Commissioner of Fines Administration, in a relatively small number of cases vulnerable clients have been left with no money in their account. When the Office of State Revenue [OSR] receives complaints from vulnerable people who have been left without access to funds the practice has been to make an immediate refund of \$100 and to consider larger refunds if the account holder provides evidence that they will suffer hardship as a result of the garnishee order. A client will generally contact the OSR to apply and the OSR will immediately deposit \$100 into their account. Additional amounts will require evidence of hardship and agreement to enter into an instalment arrangement. However, the offender remains liable to pay the fine and the bill confirms that this is the case.

The Duties Act currently provides an exemption from duty for transactions relating to amalgamations of registered clubs. The bill extends that exemption to the reverse process of de-amalgamations, including the related transfers of club premises and car parks. That has been estimated to cost \$500,000 per annum. The bill updates references to stock exchanges following the

decisions of the London and New York stock exchanges to cease their membership of the World Federation of Exchanges. The bill includes an amendment to the Taxation Administration Act to clarify the status of calculations of self-assessed tax liability by the Chief Commissioner of State Revenue. These are important amendments that ensure State tax and fines legislation keeps pace with change. I commend the bill to the House.

Question—That this bill be now read a second time—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Third Reading

Motion by Mr Dominic Perrottet agreed to:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council with a message seeking its concurrence in the bill.

Pursuant to resolution Orders of the Day (Committee Reports) proceeded with.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Report: Legislation Review Digest No. 9/56

Question—That the House take note of the report—proposed.

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) [1.12 p.m.]: I am thankful for the opportunity to comment on the ninth digest of the Fifty-sixth Parliament prepared by the Legislation Review Committee. A total of 18 bills were introduced in the sitting week commencing 20 October. Similar to the previous week, a number of those bills contained extensive reforms and represented considerable work conducted by the Government over the past few years. Due to time constraints I will not discuss all of the bills considered by the committee in this digest but will restrict my comments to a few of the substantive issues.

First, the committee considered the Bail Amendment Bill 2015 and cognate Terrorism (Police Powers) Amendment Bill 2015. The bills form part of the Government's work to protect the community from terrorism. With regard to the Terrorism (Police Powers) Bill the committee noted that the bill extends the operation of preventative detention orders. The committee commented that such orders impact on the liberty of people by allowing them to be detained without charge or trial; however, the committee concluded that they remain necessary to deal with threats of terrorism.

The committee highlighted that the Bail Amendment Bill expands the circumstances in which accused persons must show why they should be granted bail. Placing that onus on the defendant impacts on the presumption of innocence. Additionally, the bill provides that bail must be refused to people subject to a terrorism control order or who have a previous terrorist conviction unless the person can show that exceptional circumstances exist to justify bail. The committee noted that this increases the burden placed on a defendant when seeking bail and also impacts upon the presumption of innocence. Despite the detrimental impact those provisions have on a defendant, the committee considered the provisions to be appropriate in light of recent events and the extraordinary harm that can be caused by terrorism.

The Criminal Procedure Amendment (Child Sexual Offence Evidence Pilot) Bill 2015 is also considered in the digest. That bill provides for the prerecording of a child's evidence in proceedings for

certain sexual offences. The committee noted that allowing evidence to be prerecorded may in some circumstances impact upon an accused's right to a fair trial. However, the committee concluded that the benefits in protecting vulnerable witnesses from having to appear in stressful court proceedings outweighed any possible negative impact to an accused. The committee also commented on the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Stock Animals) Bill 2015. That bill seeks to introduce new requirements relating to the operation of abattoirs and intensive livestock housing facilities. The owners of such facilities will be required to install fire sprinkler systems, alarm systems and closed-circuit television facilities. The bill introduces strict liability in relation to the requirements. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in a period of imprisonment.

The committee will always comment where strict liability is imposed because the Crown is not required to prove intent, recklessness or negligence on the part of the accused. However, the committee frequently makes no adverse comment because strict liability is common in regulatory settings and there are usually only small financial penalties for non-compliance. In this case the penalties for non-compliance involve a period of imprisonment and as such the committee has concerns that this trespasses on personal rights and liberties. The committee considered a large number of bills but, as I said, I have restricted my remarks to a few of the more substantive comments in the digest. I commend the digest to the House and trust that it continues to provide assistance to members and their staff. I thank the Legislation Review Committee staff for their ongoing work.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) [1.17 p.m.]: On behalf of the Labor Opposition I speak to the Legislation Review Digest No. 9/56. The committee reviewed 14 bills, which is a large number. It is a credit to the committee staff that they were able to prepare this report in such a short time frame. Towards the end of the year the Government has introduced a large number of bills that it should have introduced earlier in order to allow the House adequate time to review. I commend the staff on that basis. I note that this week four bills have been passed that were introduced only on Tuesday. They are the Firearms and Weapons Prohibition Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and cognate bill, the Gaming and Liquor Administration Amendment Bill 2015 and the State Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2015.

The committee did not review those bills because of the short time they were before the House. The Legislative Review Act does not require that to happen, but it is an indication that the House, in the review process that it is supposed to undertake, is not being given the full information it needs to review bills before they are passed. The fact that bills have been introduced and passed in this House without being properly reviewed is an indication that this Government is trying to ram through a bunch of legislation before the end of the year. I will comment on the Retail Trading Amendment Bill 2015, which the committee considered. The Labor Opposition was of the view that the bill unduly trespassed on the rights and liberties of shop employees by putting onerous restrictions on them and requiring them, more so than other employees, to be available for work on certain public holidays. Our amendment to the committee report was not accepted but it is appropriate for me to note that in this debate. I otherwise commend the report to the House and thank the chair.

Question—That the House take note of the report—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Report noted.

[Temporary Speaker (Mr Lee Evans) left the chair at 1.19 p.m. The House resumed at 2.15 p.m.]

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome all our guests to question time this afternoon. I hope they enjoy it. This is the last sitting day of three weeks of sittings. Hopefully, therefore, members will be quiet. I extend a very warm welcome to former residents of Fairbridge Farm, guests of the Premier, and member for Manly. I welcome members of the Shoalhaven Heads branch of the Australian Red Cross, guests of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast, and member for Kiama.

I welcome 48 students from year 3 to year 6 and their four teachers, visiting us from Islington Public School in Newcastle, guests of the member for Newcastle. I welcome three student leaders from MacKillop Catholic College, three students from Lakes Grammar and their teachers, guests of the member for Wyong. I also welcome the former member for Balmain, Mr Roger Degen, and his guests, Rick and Sharonn Barth from California and Yardi Addis from Illinois, to the Parliament this afternoon.

I welcome Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz, guest of the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy and the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. I also acknowledge the presence in the gallery this afternoon of Mr David Hill, former Chairman and Managing Director of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation [ABC] and Sydney Water. I welcome everyone to question time this afternoon.

APOLOGY TO FORMER RESIDENTS OF FAIRBRIDGE FARM

Ministerial Statement

Mr MIKE BAIRD (Manly—Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney) [2.19 p.m.]: As the Speaker has mentioned, we have with us in the House today former residents of Fairbridge Farm. I am not sure if every member of Parliament has read the details of what the former residents of Fairbridge Farm have been through, but everyone would be broadly aware of the challenges they have faced. Today I want to place on record the apology I have made to each and every one of the former residents of Fairbridge Farm on behalf of the people of New South Wales. It is something we cannot really put into words. It is something which tears our hearts apart. We want to tell those former residents of Fairbridge Farm just how sorry we are. So I will read to the House what I have said to them previously.

I speak on behalf of every member of this House—every Labor Party member, every Independent member, every member of The Greens and every member on this side of the House—in making this apology from the Parliament. I thank each and every one of the former residents of Fairbridge Farm who have come to Parliament House today. I know that they have endured suffering we cannot imagine and I know that coming here today would have taken a special kind of strength. I want to thank them for their courage and for sharing their stories.

On behalf of the State of New South Wales, I want to recognise all former child migrants who attended Fairbridge Farm in Molong, New South Wales. They arrived here as vulnerable and trusting children whose parents wanted nothing more than a better life than the one they could offer. They were not given the future they were promised or the childhood they deserved. They were betrayed by the people whose job it was to protect them; and they were betrayed by this State, which did not ensure their safety. I recognise these wrongs knowing that it will not bring back the childhood they were robbed of.

I acknowledge the harm and the lifelong effects Fairbridge Farm has had on former residents and their families. I acknowledge the burden many of them carry each and every day as a result of their experiences. I am, and we all are, deeply, deeply sorry. Every child has the right to grow up knowing they are loved and wanted. The residents of Fairbridge Farm were not given that opportunity, and we acknowledge the lifelong impact their experience at Fairbridge has had on their relationships, health and employment. This apology is not enough, but I hope that it will go some way to help with their healing. And while it does not undo the damage done, I hope they can gain some comfort from the fact that we live in a very different world today. We now understand far more comprehensively the deep impact abuse and trauma has, and we will never rest when it comes to protecting the fundamental rights of children.

I want to acknowledge all of the former residents of Fairbridge Farm here today, as well as their friends who are no longer here. I want to pay particular tribute to the immense strength and courage Ms Giles and Ms Drady showed in bringing this claim on behalf of others. It has taken too long and the State should have managed the civil litigation process so much better. Thank you for having the courage to share your stories; they have touched me, and they have touched all of us, very deeply. I can promise

that we will not forget any of you. Again, we are deeply, deeply sorry; and I want to assure you that institutions like Fairbridge Farm will never happen again.

Ms LINDA BURNLEY (Canterbury) [2.24 p.m.] in reply: On behalf of the New South Wales Opposition I join the Premier and the Government in recognising the young children, now grown adults, who were students at Fairbridge Farm School. They were taken from their families in countries very far away. Many have never seen their families again. Many never got to know their brothers and sisters or cousins. But, as the Premier said, that was another time and another place. David Hill is among those seated in the gallery. As a Parliament the most that we can do today is to recognise your pain and suffering, and the contribution you have made to our community. We thank you for the compassion, generosity and, in many cases, the very, very difficult forgiveness that some have reached—some have not.

On 19 September 2009 a ceremony was held in Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens—this builds on what the Premier was saying about the actions of a bipartisan Parliament—at which the then Premier, the Hon. Pru Goward and I recognised the forgotten Australians and child migrants. The ceremony included the unveiling of a lasting memorial within the gardens as a tribute to yourselves, your families and your story. Nothing is more powerful or important than the remembering and sharing of story. It gives us humanity; it makes us who we are. Your story is an incredibly powerful and important part of the Australian narrative. We recognise that and thank you for being here today. We cannot stand in your shoes, but as a Parliament we can hold you up. Joined together we can tell you that we are trying to understand your journey, and although for you it has been filled with personal tragedy and pain, it has helped to make Australia a better nation. I join the Premier in his comments and in holding you in our hearts and minds. Thank you so much.

Members and officers of the House stood in their places as a mark of respect.

QUESTION TIME

[Question time commenced at 2.27 p.m.]

ELECTRICITY PRICES

Mr LUKE FOLEY: I direct my question to the Premier. Given that the Premier of Queensland has today directed electricity networks to accept the Australian Energy Regulator's decision to cut electricity prices, when will this Government follow Premier Palaszczuk's example and drop the legal challenge against the Australian Energy Regulator's determination so as to allow cheaper prices for families and businesses?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I try to help the Opposition. Who on earth is coming up with its tactics? When members opposite get together to discuss strategy they say, "I know what we will do. Let us ask the Government about electricity prices." They spent the whole election campaign saying that they were happy for electricity prices to be higher, and sending them to the moon. That is what the Opposition did when it opposed Rebuilding NSW. Every expert said that electricity prices in South Australia and Victoria went down. They went through the roof here. The Opposition can play political games or stick to policies it believes in. Throughout the election campaign, Opposition members said to Government members, "Listen, you lease the poles and wires. We cannot do it. We know it puts downward pressure on prices, but we cannot do it." They all said it, including the member for Kogarah.

Mr John Robertson: Who said it? Name them.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The next Leader of the Opposition said it. I know the member for Blacktown wants the position, but the member for Maroubra will be the next leader. How can the Opposition come in here and talk about electricity prices when its whole campaign was based—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. We come in here and talk about electricity prices because the Government is trying to put them up. The Government should follow Queensland's lead and withdraw the challenge.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Government is doing the exact opposite. With regard to the determination by the Australian Energy Regulator, I would have thought that Labor would want some kind of transition for the workers. It seems that Labor does not care about the workers anymore. The Government said that there should be a transition. I know that the member for Maitland believes that. Ask her what she thinks. There are others in the Labor Party who believe that. The Government also takes the advice of experts on safety. We want to ensure that the networks operate safely. That is the reason for the appeal. The difference between the Opposition and the Government is that the Government is backing lower electricity prices. The Labor Party had an opportunity to put downward pressure on prices. What happened to electricity prices in the last five years that Labor was in government? They went up by 60 per cent. Up and up they went. Captain Solar over there did not make it any better. He made it worse as he got stuck into it. The Government is proud to be about lower electricity prices. The Government has taken action to lower prices. It has taken costs out of the business—

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has remained relevant. The member for Maroubra did not have a point of order on the last occasion. There is no point of order.

Mr Michael Daley: It is very simple: withdraw the challenge.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has remained relevant to the question. The Premier has the call.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: The Opposition can do whatever it wants. The Government will do what is best for the people of New South Wales. That means undertaking the lease, which puts downward pressure on prices and allows the infrastructure—which Labor spoke about but never funded—to be built. That is the big difference. The Government is interested in the people of New South Wales and what is affecting them. The Government has actually put in place the policies to lower prices. Opposition members come in here and pretend they are interested in lower electricity prices when, for the whole election campaign, they argued for higher prices. On top of that, in the last five years that Labor had responsibility for the electricity network the prices went up by 60 per cent. Under this Government prices are coming down. That is exactly what the community wants to see and will continue to see. The Government will put the appropriate policy measures in place because it is on the side of the residents of New South Wales. They are our stakeholders. The Government will continue to look after them. Opposition members can continue to look after themselves.

CHINA-AUSTRALIA FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA: My question is addressed to the Premier. How is the Government ensuring New South Wales is ready to seize the opportunities under the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for Davidson for his question. He is doing a great job. He is obviously a strong supporter of free trade and understands its benefits. The Government is determined to support free trade. The Government's strategy focuses on the key economic powerhouses, and our key trading partners, in Asia. They are China, Japan, India, South Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. The Government understands the impact of trade. It generates significant economic activity, promotes

jobs and brings in revenue, which this State desperately needs. The Government is determined to set New South Wales on a path of sustained growth. Ensuring deeper trade relationships for the future will provide significant jobs and opportunities for this great State. That is why, from the outset, we pay credit to the Federal Government for its incredible work in bringing these key partners closer to us through free trade agreements and the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

We know that the member for Lakemba and the member for Kogarah supported the free trade agreement. We congratulate them on that. Ultimately, we need to do more in the trade sector. The future prosperity of our economy is linked to the trade relationships being driven by our trade Minister. The expectation is that the three principal agreements that have been signed, the North Asian free trade agreements, will add 9,000 Australian jobs to the economy every year. That is the sort of benefit we will see. We also expect to grow exports by 11.7 per cent.

Next week I will lead a business delegation of 15 New South Wales financial services leaders to China to promote our financial services sector, which is a critical part of this economy. We must facilitate our competitive advantage. We must not be left behind in strengthening the links to Asia that have opened up as a result of free trade agreements. China has a growing middle class. We have experts in wealth management services who are acknowledged as world leaders in the sector. There is an opportunity, under the free trade agreement, for New South Wales businesses to get ahead of the curve. That is exactly what we want to do. Sydney is the source of more than two-thirds of our exports in the financial services sector. We can do more. We want to be ambitious as we promote that sector as part of the business trip to China.

We will also be briefing investors on our infrastructure plans. Members opposite are not keen on infrastructure. We in the Government are very keen on it. There is a huge opportunity in that sector over the next few years, as we deliver a record amount of infrastructure. The global infrastructure sector is looking at New South Wales as the epicentre as we deliver a record amount of infrastructure over the next five years that will make a huge difference to every resident in the State. The delegation will target tourism. The Minister has been focused on that. The number of visitors from China, our largest market, has grown by almost 25 per cent, year on year.

The Government has an ambitious target to double it by 2020, and the Minister is taking the lead on that. China contributes \$1 of every \$5 spent, or 21 per cent, by international visitors to Australia. That is an unbelievable amount that will only get larger. It is important that, as we build our relationships, we focus on the key sectors that are growing, which provides opportunities for our businesses. Businesses in New South Wales will have huge opportunities for investment and growth through the free trade agreement. We will also focus on foreign student enrolments in New South Wales. Education remains a critical part of the economy. This is an important trip. It builds on the work done by former Premier Barry O'Farrell, who focused on building these relationships, and that of previous governments.

These relationships have never had the opportunities that will be available over the next three to five years. In New South Wales we are determined not to leave it to chance. The Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events and I will ensure that we bring New South Wales businesses to the forefront so they can take advantage of the opportunities and continue to grow the economy. The Treasurer will speak about the statistics. We are not going to leave to chance this State's jobs and economic growth. We are going to do everything we can to grow the economy, and our trade relationships are a critical part of that.

FORMER MOTOR REGISTRY STAFF EMPLOYMENT

Ms KATHY SMITH: My question is directed to the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. Will the Minister confirm that 40 per cent of former motor registry employees unsuccessfully applied for a role with Service NSW and have lost their jobs?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister, not members, will answer the question.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It has been a pretty tough three weeks for us on this side of the House.

Ms Yasmin Catley: You should try being on this side.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Swansea will not interject. I am sure the member for Gosford is interested in the answer.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Thank goodness it is coming to an end because—

Mr John Robertson: Shall we bring out the violins?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Maybe you should because I feel sorry for the Minister—rather, the member for Gosford. She will never be a Minister. It comes as no surprise that those opposite are choosing to back an outdated regime of motor registries.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gosford will come to order. She asked the question and she should listen to the Minister's answer.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It is because the Wormtongue of New South Wales politics—the member for Maroubra—was filling their minds with poisonous lies.

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: The use of the word "lies" is unparliamentary and I ask the Minister to withdraw it.

The SPEAKER: Order! The use of the word "liar" or accusing a member of lying is unparliamentary. I caution the Minister about accusing a member of filling people's heads with lies. Such language has been considered unparliamentary in the past.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It is a caution?

The SPEAKER: Order! It is a caution; it is a yellow card.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Service NSW is one of the great—

Mr Luke Foley: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will show some civility. Some of the comments in the Chamber this afternoon have been offensive, particularly comments directed towards women.

Mr Luke Foley: Madam Speaker, I seek your assistance. I do not believe the Minister has withdrawn the unparliamentary words he used.

The SPEAKER: Order! He was not asked to.

Mr Luke Foley: I ask that he withdraw those words.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury did not ask him to withdraw them and I did not ask him to withdraw them. I cautioned him because he did not directly accuse a member of being a liar. The Leader of the Opposition has now asked the Minister to withdraw those words.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I withdraw the remark. Everybody, not only in this Chamber but

across New South Wales, knows that Service NSW is a success story. Everybody seems to love Service NSW, except those opposite. Those opposite know it is a great success story. They know that rolling more than 800 transactions into a one-stop shop and improving service delivery is a great success story. But they cannot accept it.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was not about Service NSW centres. The Minister was asked to confirm the number of job losses amongst motor registry staff because we are getting letters from them saying, "I've lost my job".

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is being relevant to the question asked.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: My answer is related to the rollout of Service NSW centres and the future. NSW Labor is stuck in the past and is defending an outdated motor registry structure.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. I have the answer here for the Minister, highlighted in green. I am happy to hand it over.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will not pass documents across the table; it is unparliamentary.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: We love Service NSW. Those opposite did not complain when we put a Service NSW centre in Blacktown, in the electorate of the former Leader of the Opposition, or when we put a Service NSW centre in Auburn, in the electorate of the current Leader of the Opposition, and it is not complaining about the next Service NSW centre we are putting in in Botany, in the electorate of their next leader. The member for Maroubra loves them. [*Time expired.*]

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will cease arguing with the Minister.

TOURISM AND MAJOR EVENTS

Mr MATT KEAN: My question is addressed to the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, and Minister for Sport. How is the New South Wales Government attracting events to strengthen the New South Wales economy?

Mr STUART AYRES: I thank the member for Hornsby for his question. He is doing a fantastic job as Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer, and I also commend the Treasurer, who is overseeing an incredibly strong New South Wales economy. We have seen that reflected in the ANZ Stateometer and in the recent CommSec State of the States report, which show once again that New South Wales is the number one State. Major events are an important driving force behind that. In the year ending June 2015 there was a massive increase in visitor expenditure—it now tops \$29.5 billion. In the three years leading up to 2011, under the former Labor Government, overnight visitors dwindled by 3.1 per cent. In the three years following 2011, under this Government, overnight visitor numbers increased by 9.5 per cent. There is no doubt that under this Government New South Wales has definitely got its mojo back.

The Government is making sure that lots of events are happening across New South Wales. We have *Aladdin*, which is worth \$39 million in visitor expenditure. We have sporting events such as the NSW Open in golf, which leads into the Australian Open. The premier golfing tournament in Australia, which attracts top golfers from around the world, is being held in Sydney until 2023. In Western Sydney we have events such as the Ironman 70.3 and the V8 Supercars are coming back to Homebush. We also have fantastic events across the regions. The World Rally Championships were held recently in Coffs Harbour—a fantastic event that drives plenty of activity into those local communities. We also have new events such as Vanfest in Forbes, which has a line-up of the best acts and attracts plenty of people out to Forbes.

Mr John Robertson: George never got this excited.

Mr STUART AYRES: That's right. In January everyone should make sure they get on the train and make their way out to Parkes for the Elvis Festival; it is an unbelievable event. The Minister for Racing is doing a fantastic job with The Championships, which is now becoming a marquee event for racing in the Asia-Pacific region. There is another event that is emerging on the other side of the Chamber, a leadership race. Let us look at the form. The member for Maroubra is definitely the short-priced favourite.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. Clearly this answer is not to do with the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has strayed momentarily, but I am sure he will return to the leave of the question.

Mr STUART AYRES: Along with all these other major events, this is the closest thing Labor gets to a major event—the member for Maroubra, short-price favourite, surely.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of Order: Standing Order 73 prevents the Minister from behaving like a goose. I ask you to invoke that standing order because that is what he is doing.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has the call.

Mr STUART AYRES: The member for Maroubra is an experienced campaigner but he has struggled to get out of the stalls in the past. We have the member for Strathfield—

Ms Linda Burney: Point of order: I would like to see you in an Elvis suit.

Mr STUART AYRES: We have the member for Strathfield, lost the Newcastle maiden, stepped up in grey, definitely one to watch, the member for Strathfield. The member for Cessnock is doing alright. He is the only one over there with regional form but given it is a field of one, you would expect that.

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear what the Minister is saying and therefore I cannot rule on a point of order. The Minister will resume his seat.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of Order: You gave the Minister a direction. You indicated that he should return to the point of the question. He is flouting your ruling.

The SPEAKER: Order! I note the point of order. I ask the Minister to return to the leave of the question.

Mr STUART AYRES: They have been desperate for a major event since the leader has been on a spell for nine months. The member for Canterbury always runs second—definitely the person to put on your quinella bets.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will return to the leave of the question.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

The SPEAKER: Order! I remind the Minister to remain relevant to the question.

Mr STUART AYRES: We are backing winners every day of the week on this side of the Chamber. We have event after event. We are driving activity. It is important to the people of New South Wales that they know who is going to lead Her Majesty's Opposition. The field continues to get better.

What about the member for Keira?

Mr Guy Zangari: Point of Order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. This has nothing to do with major events in New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the Minister does not return to the leave of the question, I will ask him to resume his seat. The question was about major events, but the Minister is straying too far from the leave of the question. Government members are not helping. The Minister has the call.

Mr STUART AYRES: The member for Keira knows just how important events at the Kembla Grange racecourse are. He is a star performer down there. The Keith Nolan Classic, the lead race—he is in everything. He tries hard and he is one to watch so just keep an eye on him. The member for Kogarah is from the very strong Jamie Clements stable.

Mr Ryan Park: Point of Order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister has been asked three or four times to return to the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will resume his seat.

COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Mr PAUL LYNCH: My question is directed to the member for Epping in his capacity as the Chair of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Has his Parliamentary Committee resolved to inquire into rules around procedural and evidence issues at hearings of the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] which have already been rejected by the Gleeson-McClintock Review, or has he acted on his own?

Mr Anthony Roberts: Point of order: The question is clearly out of order. I seek your ruling on this.

The SPEAKER: Order! Questions can be directed to Chairs of committees.

Mr Anthony Roberts: To the point of order: I am asking you directly, as someone who knows more about standing orders and procedures than probably anyone in this place, whether you might take a moment to rule upon that.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Keira is making silly comments. The member for Epping has the call. Opposition members will come to order.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: It is a great delight for me, to be invited to answer a question. It is a rare privilege. I am sure Opposition members caucused hard because, in their ranks they have the member for Heffron on the committee and I am sure he is able to tell them exactly what is happening. They have the members for Gosford and Bankstown—they all sit on the committee and they do not talk about what is happening on the committee. This is a question from a party of experts on corruption.

The SPEAKER: Order! Government members will come to order. Some members and Ministers will find themselves out of the Chamber if they continue to interject after I have asked the House to come to order.

Ms Tania Mihailuk: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. It was a very clear question: Did the member for Epping get permission from the committee for that inquiry? Did the committee give him permission?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member is answering the question. There is no point of order. The

member for Bankstown will resume her seat and cease shouting across the table.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: One of the things that we may want—

Mr Andrew Fraser: Point of order: I draw your attention to Standing Order 297 which says:

A Member or any other person shall not disclose evidence, submissions or other documents and information presented to the committee which have not been reported to the House unless such disclosure is first authorised by the House or the committee.

I put it to you that the question calls for information that is privileged to the committee.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am not sure that it did that at all.

Mr Anthony Roberts: To the point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! Are you arguing with me?

Mr Anthony Roberts: Not at all but notwithstanding my learned colleague's very clear point on this, I reckon we should give the member for Epping a go because he is smashing it. I reckon we give him a go.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member has the call.

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: So, this is going to be the inquiry: How many of those opposite are genetically connected to Eddie Obeid?

Mr Michael Daley: Point of Order: Standing Order 129, he is genetically connected to Chris Hartcher—he is from the Chris Hartcher faction.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Epping has completed his answer and will resume his seat.

PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON: My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance, Services and Property. How is the Government attracting private sector investment in New South Wales? How are these opportunities creating jobs and economic growth for the State?

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: I thank the member for Camden for his question and, most importantly, his endurance because, like all of us, he has had to endure three long weeks watching the worst Opposition that this Chamber has ever had to witness. They are so pathetic and hopeless they will be in Opposition forever. Forget about being fit for the future, they are not fit for the present.

The SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: In contrast, the Baird-Grant Government has turned New South Wales into the economic powerhouse of this nation. We are creating a financial hub in Sydney with the Barangaroo project pulling in jobs and businesses from across the region. We have boosted productivity with projects like WestConnex, the North West Rail Link and a second harbour crossing. We are attracting the best and the brightest minds in the start-up world with the Bays Precinct set to be our answer to Silicon Valley. We are providing better health care by partnering the private sector for new health facilities.

We are also attracting private sector investment into Western Sydney with our new announcement of outsourcing ServiceFirst, and we are generating thousands and thousands of new jobs by rebuilding Darling Harbour, constructing new stadiums, upgrading Circular Quay and converting the sandstones to luxury hotels. While we create jobs, Labor creates unemployment. We create infrastructure, Labor creates glossy brochures. We are the party of technology; they will always be known as the party of Tcard.

The SPEAKER: Order! I know that Opposition members have been instructed to chat amongst themselves, but I would appreciate it if they kept their conversations down, left the Chamber or ignored the instructions they have received, which would be even more helpful.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: Let me sum up the last disgraceful three weeks that we, on this side of the House, have had to endure. After running this State into the ground, Labor had the audacity to come into this place and ask us questions about issues they clearly know nothing about. Yesterday they asked the Treasurer questions on toll roads yet Labor opposed the building of the M2 and called it the road to nowhere—and that is where New South Wales Labor is heading under the invisible man. We should be putting tolls on New South Wales Labor Party members coming into this place because of the economic destruction they leave behind. The Opposition then questioned the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure on our \$60 billion pipeline of infrastructure projects after they delivered nothing but delays, excuses and incompetence for 16 years.

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: My point of order is Standing Order 73. This is not a time for the Minister's personal reflections, whilst we appreciate his infatuation with the Opposition. The question from the member for Camden is quite relevant and we would like to hear a legitimate answer.

The SPEAKER: Order! I do not think that they were generally directed at an individual but more or less to a group of people, so it would not be contrary to standing orders.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: The Leader of the Opposition had the audacity to ask the Premier for a five-minute debate on his achievements. Their biggest achievement was to make New South Wales the basket case of Australia. New South Wales Labor does not deserve a five-second debate. They are the worst Opposition in the whole world. To paraphrase that great Labor Prime Minister Paul Keating, who now votes for the New South Wales Liberal Party, "NSW Labor is the greatest destroyer of jobs and investment since the plague" and just like the plague, they poison everything they touch.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET: It has taken a government with a Midas touch—the Baird-Grant Government—to bring back the bling to New South Wales.

WILLIAMTOWN LAND CONTAMINATION AND FISHING BAN

Ms KATE WASHINGTON: My question is directed to the Minister for the Environment. Commercial fishers in my electorate have been banned from fishing and have been living without an income for eight weeks due to toxic contamination from the RAAF Base at Williamtown. What steps has the Minister taken to see those families receive financial assistance so that they can put food on their tables now, and not in eight months when the scientific testing is due to be completed.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Kogarah will cease interjecting.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I assure the House and the member for Port Stephens that the member and I are in furious agreement about the urgent need for financial assistance for all those whose businesses, in particular, commercial fishers have been affected by the eight-month ban, and the earlier ban, on commercial fishing in the Port Stephens area. It is the job of the Government to put public interest

and public health first. That is why the Government engaged Mary O'Kane and other members on the expert panel to look at this matter in a rigorous and independent way to make sure we are putting the public health of our citizens first. I am advised that the risk is low from perfluorooctanoic acid [PFOA] and perfluorooctane sulfonate [PFOS] coming out of the Williamstown RAAF Base.

We have put in advisories about consumption of food and groundwater in the Port Stephens area, and placed bans on commercial and recreational fishing in parts of the Port Stephens area. So far as financial assistance is concerned, polluter pays is the usual principle. It is clear the PFOA and the PFOS have come from the Williamstown RAAF Base. It has been the consistent position of the New South Wales Government that it is the Commonwealth's responsibility to meet that compensation. It is not just the State Government that says that but other members of Parliament as well. The Federal member for Paterson, Mr Baldwin, said that the Federal Government "has got to step up to the plate. The facts are Defence caused the problem. The fishers have got all legitimate concerns and this is none of their fault". We are in furious agreement.

Among other things, I have met, and written to, Assistant Minister for Defence Darren Chester to raise this issue. Over a month ago the Environment Protection Authority had extensive correspondence with Defence setting out the New South Wales Government's expectations. I have made two telephone calls to Marise Payne, the Minister for Defence, in the past week. At 4.00 p.m. today I am leading a New South Wales delegation to Minister Payne in Sydney to remind the Commonwealth of the urgency of this matter, to put the protection of commercial fishers in Port Stephens first and foremost in their deliberations and to continue to cooperate with the New South Wales Government to protect the health of the people of New South Wales.

RENEWABLE ENERGY ACTION PLAN

Mr ADAM MARSHALL: My question is addressed to the Minister for the Environment. What is the Government doing to attract investment and create jobs in the renewable energy sector?

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I thank the member for Northern Tablelands for his question. He is a strong advocate for the jobs and growth that the renewable energy revolution will bring to his electorate and the rest of New South Wales. In 2013 we released the NSW Renewable Energy Action Plan to increase energy from renewables at the least cost to energy customers and maximum benefits for the people of New South Wales. The plan is working. To date we have leveraged \$582 million of Commonwealth funding for 104 renewable energy projects in New South Wales. I am proud to work with my colleague the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, whose industriousness, resourcefulness and enthusiasm has built us a pipeline of renewable energy projects. A further \$6 billion worth of projects are seeking approval.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: We are the only State with a Renewable Energy Advocate. We want New South Wales to be the high-tech capital of the renewable energy industry in Australia. We want renewables and we want them here in New South Wales. Earlier this month I released the Zero Net Energy Town Blueprint in Uralla with the member for Northern Tablelands and Mr Scot MacDonald, who was representing the Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy. The Zero Net Energy Town, or ZNET project, is an exciting and ambitious challenge. It aims to help communities across New South Wales satisfy their own energy needs from renewable energy.

Overseas, distributed renewable energy is quite common but in Australia it is a new area of opportunity and growth. The blueprint suggests that Uralla could generate 40 to 70 per cent of its energy needs within five years through energy efficiency and small-scale renewable energy projects. The blueprint also outlines how Uralla could become energy self-sufficient by developing town-scale renewable energy generation. Other towns are now reaching out, excited about this model. I congratulate

the community of Uralla and the member for Northern Tablelands for his leadership on this. The member for Northern Tablelands certainly has got the wind in his sails.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Keira will come to order. The member for Bankstown will come to order. The Minister has the call.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: I understand that the White Rock wind farm near Glen Innes will soon be underway, which is great news. The New South Wales Government has approved construction and operation of up to 119 wind turbines. That would result in up to 400 megawatts of renewable electricity. Stage 1 of the project will produce 175 megawatts, which is enough to power 75,000 average homes annually. Speaking of New England, the Government is also proud to be working closely with TransGrid. We are forging ahead on a truly visionary project to develop a renewable energy hub in the New England region. The project is the brainchild of TransGrid's best and brightest. It will make grid connection for large-scale renewable energy projects more efficient and cost-effective. It has the potential to fast-track more than 2,500 jobs and \$1.5 billion in investment. When it comes to solar power members opposite have a history of disaster. Let us not forget the debacle of the Solar Bonus Scheme.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maroubra will come to order.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: The Auditor-General said the scheme "lacked the most elementary operational controls, had no overall plan and risks were poorly managed". We are unleashing a solar revolution. Through the Climate Change Fund we have secured two large-scale solar power stations, one in Nyngan and the other in Broken Hill, at a total cost of \$440 million with around \$65 million provided by the New South Wales Government. The Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy and I attended the installation of the final photovoltaic [PV] modules at Nyngan in April and the completion of Broken Hill earlier this month. Those solar power stations will power around 50,000 average New South Wales homes.

Around 450 jobs were created during the construction period. They are the biggest solar projects in Australia and they are right here in New South Wales. As the Prime Minister has said, we live in an age of disruption. Our action plan is attracting the jobs and investment that the disruption in the energy market is bringing. To that end, we want New South Wales to be the high-tech capital of the renewable energy industry in Australia. We are open for the renewable energy business, and we want that business in order to help keep New South Wales number one.

WESTCONNEX

Ms JENNY LEONG: My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier explain the delay in the release of the WestConnex business case that the Government had committed to publicly releasing in mid-2015?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will come to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I thank the member for Newtown for another sensible question that again shows members how to ask questions and represent their communities. The Labor Party could learn a lot from The Greens members. In simple terms, there has been a change in configuration in the business case. The opportunities that come through Rebuilding NSW provide additional opportunities to connect to the north and the south. That is being finalised and will be released.

Ms Jodi McKay: When?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield did not ask the question; the member for Newtown asked it. If she has a point of order she can make it, but there are no grounds for one at the moment.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It will be released.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Blacktown will come to order.

Mr John Robertson: I am sorry, Madam Speaker. It is open mic day again and the Jerry Seinfeld of New South Wales is at the microphone.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: Robbo, we would back you in. A lot of momentum is going to the member for Maroubra but I think we need to shift it and bring back Robbo. I thought the member for Maroubra's time was coming.

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order. I am sure the member for Newtown would like to have her question answered without interjections.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: But they need to be careful because when the member for Maroubra gets the numbers he still does not run.

Ms Jenny Leong: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. I asked the Premier to explain the delay in the release of the business plan.

The SPEAKER: Order! I have noted that due to the interjections from the Opposition, which the Premier was responding to, he has not been able to get to the part of the question the member for Newtown wanted answered. I am sure he will do so.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I answered the member's question up-front and explained the reason. Members opposite have not forgotten that when we came to government we established Infrastructure NSW and asked it to look at all of the economic priorities across the State. What was the number one priority that it identified? It was WestConnex. Infrastructure NSW has signed off on that as well. We know the member is against WestConnex. Importantly, we also know that the Leader of the Opposition is against WestConnex. We know that the Leader of the Opposition loves congestion. He is probably like the former member for Toongabbie, who said that being in congestion is like being in love. We know that is also what the Leader of the Opposition thinks. Members on this side of the House are determined to take away congestion. WestConnex is just one part of that. I remind the member that we are also building the metro. The metro together with WestConnex will take away congestion. We are determined to do the right thing by the people of this city.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Strathfield will come to order.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: A big part of doing the right thing is taking away congestion. WestConnex and the Sydney Metro will achieve that. We are getting on with doing it and we are proud to be doing it. We have committed to releasing the WestConnex business case and that is exactly what we will do. We look forward to having further discussions but, ultimately, we are not backing away from WestConnex because we are determined to make a difference to people in Western Sydney. We are determined to reduce their travel times and put more jobs and infrastructure into Sydney. We are determined to improve productivity in the city because that is what Sydney needs.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Newtown will come to order.

Ms Jodi McKay: Point of order: My point of order goes to Standing Order 129 on relevance, and given I am closer to the dispatch box than the member for Newtown, I agree with the member for Newtown that we need to have the business case released.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has been relevant to the question. There is no point of order.

The member for Strathfield will resume her seat. The Premier is not answering a question she asked.

Mr MIKE BAIRD: It is pretty simple. Have we not said that we will release it this year? Yes, we have said that on many occasions. So it will be released this year.

Ms Jenny Leong: But why the delay?

Mr MIKE BAIRD: I have explained the delay.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Newtown has already asked her question. The member for Newtown will come to order.

STATE ECONOMY

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS: My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills, and Minister for Small Business. What is the Government doing to attract international investment to New South Wales and to boost our regional economy?

Mr JOHN BARILARO: I thank the member for Clarence, and Parliamentary Secretary for the North Coast for his question. He is a strong advocate for the regional economy and for regional communities. He is a strong advocate for making sure that jobs are created in regional New South Wales. I will update the House. Today is a great day for New South Wales—in fact every day is a great day for regional New South Wales—with the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] figures showing that employment in regional New South Wales grew by 54,500 jobs over the year to September 2015.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. There is no need for the member for Londonderry to be angry. There is no need for members to scream and shout. The House will come to order.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: This figure represents the largest increase in jobs in regional areas across the nation. Here in New South Wales we are leading the way. Most importantly, when it comes to youth employment we have seen an additional 15,500 jobs created for young people in regional New South Wales, which is an increase of 8 per cent. This not only confirms the great investment and record infrastructure spend by the Baird-Grant Government—the \$8 billion investment in regional infrastructure projects—but also shows that business has confidence in the economy and in this Government as it delivers for the people of regional New South Wales. Across New South Wales we are seeing many different industries—

The SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: We are now taking our produce to the world stage, and encouraging investment and export opportunities for regional manufacturers and producers. Regional New South Wales is set to benefit from the dining boom. We have the best produce in the world here, and the world wants that produce. Recent trade agreements with Japan, Korea and China will see tariffs reduced or removed for products such as beef, fruit, vegetables, nuts and bottled wine. Agriculture contributes \$1.3 billion to the State's economy and employs almost 11,000 people. Agriculture comes in all shapes and sizes. In the electorate of Tweed, a little company called Pocket Herbs & Produce grows gourmet microgreens, and has been growing them since 2009.

The SPEAKER: Order! If Opposition members have had enough then they can leave the Chamber.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: It has a strong domestic market on the eastern seaboard for its products. Thanks to the assistance of this Government, the business is now being organised to take advantage of

export opportunities. Bindaree Beef in Inverell on the Northern Tablelands announced that one of China's largest meat processors has taken a significant strategic stake in its business, investing \$140 million. This takes Bindaree's value to just under \$400 million. Another success story from the electorate of Northern Tablelands is ICT International, which makes and exports scientific instruments to monitor how plants respond to the environment. This is Australian intellectual property—Australian manufactured and engineered products being exported across the world. New South Wales has a range of fantastic products that can be exported. I really have to hand it to the Leader of the Opposition for his foresight, his intelligence and his far-reaching vision for one of those exporters—TAFE. In his budget reply speech the Leader of the Opposition shared his brilliant ideas for TAFE when he said that it should be heading offshore to India:

There is an opportunity for TAFE NSW to be part of it, providing training to hundreds of thousands—potentially millions—of Indians over coming years.

That is brilliant—what a masterstroke. He followed it up by saying:

Exporting its training expertise provides TAFE with the ability to earn a return that can then be invested in rebuilding the TAFE system for the people of New South Wales.

It sounds like he is endorsing the transformation plan that we have for TAFE NSW. It is all about looking for commercial opportunities and a return on investment for the people of New South Wales. He has endorsed this. Unfortunately the Leader of the Opposition is a little bit late to the party with his brilliant idea. TAFE NSW institutes are already engaged in more than 40 international projects with countries including China, Vietnam, India, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Fiji, South Korea, Abu Dhabi and New Zealand. I am not sure how big Leader of the Opposition's feet are, but that sounds a lot more than just a toe in the water approach. He was looking at opportunities in India; we are looking at opportunities across Asia. It seems that we are doing the right thing.

Pursuant to standing order additional information provided.

Mr JOHN BARILARO: TAFE NSW has recently signed an agreement to deliver training courses in bakery to 10,000 students in India. The Sydney Institute is in final negotiations on a pilot program for teacher training and course development as part of a Sister State relationship that New South Wales has with Maharashtra. A further six businesses are in negotiations with TAFE New South Wales. We have some great stories, some great partnerships and some great commercial arrangements in regional New South Wales, and TAFE has a great export product. I give the Leader of the Opposition a big pat on the back for his thinking and of course his gymnastics—while he might flip on one side when he is backing the anti-Chinese radio ad run during the recent election to try to scare the people of New South Wales, he clearly flopped to the other side when talking about international opportunities for TAFE NSW.

That is why I now dub the Leader of the Opposition "Flip-Flop Foley". He does not know today what he wants to do tomorrow. The Leader of the Opposition, with his vision for TAFE, should watch what this Government is delivering. He is endorsing the approach of this Government and re-announcing it. We know that the Labor Party is very good at making announcements but very poor on following through. We saw that with the ex-Premier, the previous Labor leader Kristina "Kodak" Keneally. She was all about the photo opportunity and the announcement, but she never followed through on delivering infrastructure.

Mr Paul Lynch: Point of order: First, there is way too much noise in the Chamber. Secondly, if the Minister for Regional Development and Minister for Small Minister wishes to refer to members, and former members, he must do so by their correct title. He is in breach of Standing Order 75.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am finding it very difficult to hear with the level of interjection.

Question time concluded at 3.27 p.m.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders: Divisions and Quorums

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove—Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy) [3.27 p.m.]:
I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended at this sitting to provide that for the remainder of this sitting no divisions be conducted or quorums be called.

This has been a long three weeks of sitting in which this Government has been able to manage and pass a large amount of legislation that contains reforms to drive this State and its economy forward. I particularly pay tribute to you, Madam Speaker, for the remarkable job you do, while not unexpected, to ensure this place is managed well. I thank the member for Maroubra for the great leadership he has shown over the past three weeks in assisting me, and the Whips, to get these remarkable pieces of legislation through the House. Being a fair-minded gentleman, I have moved this motion to suspend standing and sessional orders in recognition of the hard work of members and to get them home to their families as soon as possible.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put and resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS

Reference: Inquiry into the review of the Code of Conduct for Members

Mr MARK COURE: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics has resolved to conduct an inquiry into the review of the Code of Conduct for Members, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced that the following petitions signed by fewer than 500 persons were lodged for presentation:

Powerhouse Museum Ultimo

Petition requesting the retention of the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo and the expansion of museum services to other parts of New South Wales, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Inner-city Social Housing

Petition requesting the retention and proper maintenance of inner-city public housing stock, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Pet Shops

Petition opposing the sale of animals in pet shops, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

Pig-dog Hunting Ban

Petition requesting the banning of pig-dog hunting in New South Wales, received from **Mr Alex Greenwich**.

The Clerk announced that the following Minister had lodged a response to a petition signed by more than 500 persons:

The Hon. Paul Toole—Local Government Amalgamations—lodged 17 September 2015 (Mr Luke Foley)

CENTENARY OF ANZAC

Debate resumed from 28 October 2015.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) [3.32 p.m.]: In late 1909 Field Marshal Viscount Kitchener of Great Britain visited Australia by invitation of the Government to inspect the existing state of defence preparedness of the Commonwealth and then to prepare a report advising on the best means of providing Australia with a land defence. Lord Kitchener's report was submitted in February 1910. It recommended the introduction of compulsory military training. A public version of that report was published as "Defence of Australia: Memorandum in Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers". The report went into great detail and considered the number of troops required to defend Australia. It suggested the type of army units required, including the number of infantry units, light horse units and artillery batteries needed to support the force. Additionally, locations were identified where units could be based and trained.

The Liverpool area was one of the locations suggested by Lord Kitchener as being ideal for a military base and training area. Following Australia's entry into World War 1, many Australian men volunteered to fight in Europe. They were stationed in camps around Australia for military training before being shipped to the front. At Casula and Liverpool staging and training camps were established for the men who had volunteered. On 25 April 1915 Australia and New Zealand soldiers formed part of the allied expedition to capture the Gallipoli peninsula. This combined force became known as the Anzacs, and the pride they took in that name continues to this day.

On the morning of 25 April 1915 the Anzacs set out to capture the Gallipoli peninsula in order to open the Dardanelles to the allied navies. The objective was to capture Constantinople, now Istanbul, capital of the Ottoman Empire and an ally of Germany. They landed at Gallipoli, where they met fierce resistance from the Ottoman Turkish defenders. Their plan to knock Turkey out of the war quickly became a stalemate; and the campaign dragged on for eight months. At the end of 1915 the allied forces were evacuated. Both sides suffered heavy casualties and endured great hardships. More than 8,000 Australian soldiers were killed. News of the landing on Gallipoli and the events that followed had a profound impact on Australians at home. Hence 25 April soon marked the date on which Australians remember the sacrifice of those who died in war.

The ANZACs were courageous and although the Gallipoli campaign failed in its military objectives, the Australian and New Zealand actions during that campaign left us all a powerful and lasting legacy. In researching some of the local military history of the Holsworthy, Moorebank, Casula and Liverpool areas I came across an incident in early 1916. Valentine's Day 1916—14 February—became known as the day of the 1916 Liverpool Riot. It was also known as the Battle for Central Station. That was when a large group of Australian soldiers rioted through the streets of Sydney and surrounding area.

Mr David Elliott: No beer.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: That is right, no beer. As I said earlier, following Australia's entry into World War I many men volunteered to fight. They were stationed in camps around Australia for training before being shipped to the front. At about 9.00 am on 14 February 1916, at the Casula Camp in Liverpool, it was announced that the current training session would be extended into the evening—which

meant a 27-hour stretch for some recruits. Some 5,000 recruits refused to accept extra duty and went on strike to protest the poor conditions at the camp. The soldiers left the camp and marched towards the centre of Liverpool, where they were joined by other recruits from camps around the area. The number of protesting soldiers had now reached as many as 15,000. They invaded a number of local hotels, drank the bars dry, refused to pay and started to vandalise the surrounding buildings.

With the local hotels now being dry, the soldiers moved to Liverpool railway station where they overpowered the engineers and commandeered trains heading to Sydney. They then continued the rampage through Sydney streets. Again, hotels were the main area of interest for the troops. But the riot took a turn for the worse at Central Station where about 100 soldiers were confronted by armed military guards. A shot was fired by a rioting soldier over the guards' heads. In response, the guards returned fire—killing one soldier and seriously injuring eight others. This incident had a sobering effect on the soldiers, and many began surrendering to police and military guards. Following the riot, about 1,000 soldiers were court-martialled and either jailed or discharged from the army. However, Australia was desperate for recruits to fight in the war, so many escaped punishments and were sent overseas—although it is hardly escaping punishment to be sent to a war zone.

This event gave the temperance movement a compelling argument in favour of 6 o'clock closing, and in the subsequent referendum of June 1916, 62 per cent of voters voted in favour of early closing. I have referred to this incident in my speech because in many ways it typifies the larrikin nature of the Australian soldier—soldiers that soon became known for their fighting ability, mateship, courage, initiative and respect for each other. They were not, however, known for their respect for senior officers, but the senior officers knew the value of Australian troops. This year, as part of Liverpool City Council's comprehensive Anzac Centenary Commemoration Program, portrait images of World War I soldiers born and bred in Liverpool—43 in total—were projected onto the facade of a building at the centre of Liverpool central business district, across from the train station. The images were five-storey-high portraits. The stories of these soldiers can be found in the publication "Our Liverpool Boys", which is available free of charge at all Liverpool libraries.

The projections were shown from Saturday 18 April to Sunday 26 April, from 6.00 p.m. to 12.00 p.m. On Friday 24 April they remained on show until 6.00 a.m. the next day, Anzac Day, to coincide with the Dawn Service in Bigge Park, down the road from Liverpool railway station. This was the first time that Liverpool City Council had presented public projections. They were enthusiastically received by local audiences and by national and international audiences, who followed their progress through social media. In addition to the visual display projected onto buildings adjacent to Liverpool station, a booklet was produced, titled *Our Liverpool Boys*. Copies are available free of charge at Liverpool City Library. The booklet gives a brief account of the war service of 43 young men who answered the call to arms. I will read onto the record of the House some extracts from the publication.

John Boyland was 20 years old when he enlisted on 21 August 1914. He was the seventh of 12 children born to Courtney and Elizabeth Boyland, and at the time of enlistment he was a labourer living in Cecil Park. John Boyland suffered a bullet wound to his arm at Gallipoli on 30 April 1915. He also saw service in Egypt and at the Western Front, and was discharged on 18 January 1919. He also enlisted for service during the Second World War, stating his year of birth as 1905, 10 years later than in his World War I service record, because the age limit for enlisting in 1939 was 35.

William Brown, MM, was born in Liverpool in 1894 and enlisted on 25 May 1915. He embarked from Sydney on 14 July 1915 aboard HMAT *Orsova* A67 with the 2nd Battalion. The *Orsova* docked in Western Australia on its way to war. After the ensuing leave, William Brown, along with some fellow soldiers, failed to return to the ship in time for embarkation. He was fined 28 days pay and confined to camp for 14 days while he awaited a new passage. This delay necessitated transfers to the 11th Battalion and then to the 51st Battalion. Within a few months, Brown was promoted to corporal. He was promoted to sergeant on 24 April 1916 and then to the rank of second lieutenant on 26 August 1916. He was killed in action and was later awarded the Military Medal. Newspapers reported this honour:

London Gazette, 16 November 1916 and Commonwealth of Australia Gazette, 19 April 1917: For bravery and coolness near MOUQUET FARM during a night attack August 14th and 15th 1916. This NCO organised and linked up parties to dig in and held them there by dint of cheerful example. He also assisted in getting wounded into safety and bandaged up one officer while under heavy fire.

John Frederick Kammel, MM, was born in 1895 in Liverpool and enlisted as a 19-year-old on 4 January 1915. He arrived in Gallipoli on 27 June 1915, where he joined the 13th Battalion as a signaller. He received a gunshot wound to the leg in August and was transferred to hospital in Egypt. He rejoined his battalion at Gallipoli on 13 November 1915. On 3 March 1916 he was transferred to the 45th Battalion and sailed on the *Kinfauns Castle* to Marseille, where he disembarked on 8 June 1916. In June 1917 John Kammel was again wounded in the leg, but was able to rejoin his unit on 16 August. On his return to Australia he disembarked in Sydney on 20 June 1919 and was discharged medically unfit on 4 October 1919. He was awarded the Military Medal for bravery in the field. In a letter to his parents, published in the *Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers' Advocate* on 27 October 1915, John Kammel wrote:

I had the misfortune to be hit in the right thigh by a Turkish bullet and am an inmate of the Egyptian Hospital, Port Said. I was hit at 2pm on August 18, and left the casualty station at 3.30pm same day, when we were shipped on a cutter that took us to the hospital ship lying in the stream. Received great treatment from the orderlies and sisters. I am suffering great pain, the burnt steel being in the thigh. After a day's travelling we arrived at Port Said, where an operation was performed. The cut is about 2 inches long, with six stitches, but it will be some considerable time before I will be on active service again. There are many wounded here—some that would move you to tears. The same day that I was rendered hors de combat a mate, a signaller attached to the RSM, was wounded in the left shoulder by shrapnel. I happened to be with him, and was second last man, and just missed it. We engaged the enemy successfully on August 6, 7, and 8 putting him to rout, taking many prisoners and advancing over two miles one afternoon recently. Our chief contentions are with machine guns and shrapnel.

John Kammel also served on the Western Front and returned to Australia on 5 April 1919. I would like to have included all 43 accounts, but time does not allow for that indulgence. Instead, I selected three at random. I thank the Liverpool City Library staff for their assistance in providing a copy of their booklet. I thank all those who undertook the research and put it together. Anzac Day remembrance takes two forms. Commemorative services are held at dawn—the time of the original landing at Gallipoli—across the nation. Later in the day, ex-service men and women meet to take part in marches through the major cities and in many smaller centres. Commemorative ceremonies are more formal and are held at war memorials around the country.

In this year, the centenary of that fateful day when our troops made their way ashore at what is now known as Anzac Cove, many communities have remembered their local history. Local councils and historical societies have provided a wealth of facts and information on what happened in their communities during that period. One such group, the Liverpool Genealogy Society, organised a re-enactment of Liverpool's first Anzac Day ceremony on Sunday 24 April 1921. On re-enactment day, Mayor of Liverpool, Councillor Ned Mannoun, played the role of Mayor Les Ashcroft. Craig Kelly, MP, Federal member for Hughes, played Mr Bowen, member for Nepean in the House of Representatives.

Vic Watts from Liverpool Returned and Services League [RSL] played Mr McDonald, President of the New South Wales RSL. Kevin Wass represented Captain Leake, president of the Liverpool branch of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League. Councillor Geoff Sheldon played Alderman Ted Pearce. Reg Bonney, a member of the Genealogy Society, played Reverend Robinson of St Luke's Church. Bugler Amanda Crnkovic from the Liverpool City Brass Band represented the Liverpool brass band that played on the day in 1921. I played the part of Mr Walker, member for Hawkesbury.

We all had our prepared speeches and parts to play. I give a special note of thanks to Pam Valentine, president of the Liverpool Genealogy Society, for the part she played in researching the speeches from 1921. It was amazing to read the very words that were read at that first Anzac Day ceremony in Liverpool. Photos of the day were shown on a screen. We also sang the national anthem, which was then a patriotic song. We sang all four verses. None of us had ever heard one of the verses, so it was special to be able to sing it. The earliest known sound recording in Australia was used at the landing of Australian troops in Egypt, circa 1916. It was used to dramatise the arrival of the Australian troops en route to Gallipoli. It was a nice tie-in that that song was sung on the day. Pam managed to obtain speeches from a report published in the *Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers' Advocate* on Sunday 30 April 1921. I extend my thanks to everyone involved in the special day. I will always remember it.

This year was my first Anzac Day as the inaugural member for the new electoral district of Holsworthy. It seems fitting that I speak about the commemorative services that were conducted not only in the electorate but also in the suburb of Holsworthy in particular. It is becoming more common for primary schools and high schools throughout the nation to conduct remembrance services on school grounds and in school hours in the week leading up to Anzac Day. On Friday 24 December 2015 both schools in Holsworthy, Holsworthy Public School and Holsworthy High School, conducted Anzac commemorative services on their school grounds. These schools, because of their location, have students whose parents are currently serving in the Australian military.

I extend my thanks to both principals, Mr Peter Ward from Holsworthy Public School and Mr John Frew from Holsworthy High School, for their invitations to attend the school services. The honour guard for both schools was provided by two separate contingents from the army barracks at Holsworthy. Additionally, the high school had a mixture of navy and school cadets in uniform on parade for the service. The Holsworthy High School students provided a three-course lunch for the approximately 60 guests who attended the service. It was of a very high standard, as it always is. I thank both teachers and students for their efforts in commemorating Anzac Day.

On Anzac Day I attended the dawn service at the School of Military Engineering at Holsworthy Barracks with serving and former members of the Royal Australian Engineers. The School of Military Engineering was established in 1939 at Steele Barracks in Moorebank and, after more than 75 years, has been relocated recently to Steele Lines at Holsworthy. A monumental construction has been carried out at Holsworthy Barracks to accommodate the move of the school. The new site has a chapel, a museum, lecture rooms, offices and accommodation for trainees. As part of the move, the Royal Australian Engineers memorial was relocated to a site adjacent to the new chapel.

As with all construction projects, there were hiccups, and the recent cyclonic weather conditions in Sydney at that time certainly interfered with the landscaping of the new site. I believe the final turf was not laid until the day before Anzac Day. I stress the importance of having it all ready for the day. My point of contact and host officer for the day was Lieutenant Jillie-May Reading. I should point out that the service was preceded by a gunfire breakfast. Anyone who has attended one of these breakfasts, at which approximately 1,800 service men and women are in attendance, will appreciate that it can be difficult to find a specific person in the pre-dawn darkness. To Lieutenant Reading's credit, she found me and made sure that I was in the right place at the right time, and I thank her for looking after me. The service commenced with the dedication of the memorial by Chaplain Ricky Su and the dedication address was delivered by Lieutenant General F. J. Hickling, AO, CSC, (Retired). [*Extension of time agreed to.*]

A moving Anzac Day address was presented by Major General S. J. Day, AM, DSC, to the 1,800 people who were in attendance. During the service I had the sincere honour of laying a wreath at the cenotaph on behalf of the electorate of Holsworthy. Additionally, wreaths were laid by the following people: Brigadier Wayne Budd on behalf of sappers everywhere; Lieutenant Colonel Ken Martin and Warrant Officer 1 David Harvey on behalf of the School of Military Engineering; Lieutenant Wynne on behalf of the Royal New Zealand Engineering Corps; Quartermaster Sergeant Instructor Michael on behalf of the Royal Engineers; Major Caswell on behalf of the United States Army Corps of Engineers;

Captain Eka on behalf of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force; Lieutenant Jioji on behalf of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces; Lieutenant Mafile'o on behalf of His Majesty's Armed Forces Tonga; Lieutenant Wahid on behalf of the Royal Brunei Land Forces; Major Schmidt and Warrant Officer 2 Crook on behalf of the Special Operations Engineer Regiment; Lieutenant Colonel Quinn and Warrant Officer 1 Hancock on behalf of 19th Chief Engineer Works; and Major Plimmer and Warrant Officer 2 Beattie on behalf of 17 Construction Squadron.

Wreaths were also laid by Major Houlahan and Warrant Officer 2 Kay on behalf of the 5th Engineer Regiment; Lieutenant Mitchell on behalf of the 8th Engineer Regiment; Mr Jack Peel on behalf of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam; Mr Alan Preston on behalf of 1 Field Squadron; Mr Terry Doyle on behalf of the 17th Construction Squadron; Mr Phil Hurren on behalf of the 55th Advanced Engineer Stores Squadron; Mr Allan Reading on behalf of the 32 Small Ships Squadron; Major Jason Lilly on behalf of the Salvation Army; and Ethan Worth, Eahan Larkin and Jaydan Susnjara on behalf of the 1st Hoxton Park Scout Group. The motto of the Royal Australian Engineers "Ubique", which translates as "Everywhere", is shared with the Royal Australian Engineers' parent corps, the Royal Engineers. This motto was bestowed by King William IV in 1832 in recognition that sappers and gunners were not entitled to carry Regimental Colours and they typically served as small detachments instead of a whole unit.

Mr David Elliott: Because they left them on the battlefield.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: Because they left them on the battlefield. The Royal Australian Engineers adopted the Royal Engineers' practice of calling their private soldiers "sappers" in recognition of the fact that the earliest engineers had been primarily concerned with driving "saps", or the more familiar term is tunnels, both towards the enemy lines and underneath fortifications. The School of Military Engineering is also known as the home of the sapper as this is the training area where they receive their initial engineer training and any further specialist training. The service was attended by more than 1,800 people and an interesting point was that almost all of them had undergone training at the school or had a family member who had undergone training at that school. It was an honour and a privilege for me to attend this service and to lay a wreath at the cenotaph as a way of recognising their service. Brigadier Wayne Budd took me through the new museum at Holsworthy.

Mr David Elliott: I have been there. It's very good.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: Isn't it brilliant? I thank Brigadier Wayne Budd for showing me through the museum. I encourage all schoolchildren to go and see the collection at the museum. It is interesting to note that every single piece of equipment in that museum is in working order. It will be particularly special for future generations; I was very impressed with everything there. I was also pleased to lay a poppy on the wall of the museum. I encourage all schoolchildren, particularly children in my electorate who have a close connection to the defence forces, to visit the museum. I am pleased to speak to this motion and I thank the member for Baulkham Hills, who brought the motion to the House.

Mr David Elliott: It was Anthony Roberts—Captain Roberts.

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS: I know the member for Baulkham Hills has been present in the Chamber during every contribution to this debate. I conclude my remarks by saying: Lest we forget.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea) [3.55 p.m.]: One could argue that what happened on the shores of Gallipoli in 1915 did, indeed, mark the birth of our great nation. The notions of mateship, Australian ingenuity, the larrikin spirit and courage were all embedded into the Australian fabric on that fateful day and the ensuing months and years. At 4.00 a.m. on 25 April 1915, 22-year-old Sydney Harrie Skinner was just one of the expectant nervous Anzacs on board His Majesty's Australian Transport Ship 15 as it anchored off Kabe Tepe Point on the Gallipoli peninsula. That morning Sydney Skinner penned a letter to his parents, which read:

As the day broke and the light became brighter you could just distinguish the land ahead. Along the shore were fifteen battle ships, laying grim, and silent, waiting for the shore batteries to open fire.

At 5am they opened fire on us—shrapnel was bursting everywhere.

What an extraordinarily vivid firsthand description of that landing. On 25 April this year our nation stopped to recognise 100 years since those gallant men and women landed at Gallipoli. I was proud to attend and contribute to the first Swansea Anzac Day Dawn Service to be held in decades, and I was proud to be able to recognise in this Parliament during my first community recognition statement the wonderful efforts of the Swansea RSL Sub-branch and the Swansea RSL in reviving this service. Once again, on behalf of the Swansea community, I commend the work of the Swansea RSL Sub-branch executive and members, whose enormous efforts brought to life this beautiful tribute to their comrades fallen in battles past.

We came together in Swansea on Anzac Day 2015 and stood as one, just as millions did at equally moving ceremonies across the nation and across the seas at the shores where our brave soldiers landed that fateful morning. We stood together as one at the newly built Swansea memorial to commemorate their great sacrifice for our nation, to honour them and to remember them. For some of those soldiers their stories will never be uncovered. Many servicemen had no physical records. They had enlisted underage and under false names. Their legacy was kept alive in the hearts, minds and stories of their fellow comrades—people who were strangers to them before their journey to Gallipoli. These new-found comrades stood by them until the end and continued to keep the memories of the battlefield alive. What returned from Gallipoli in place of the fallen were tales of mateship, courage and compassion. These are the values that we as a nation have inherited from our Anzacs.

The worst times bring out the best in us and in times of turmoil we extend support to each other. We share tales of grief, fear, hope and celebration. At precisely 6.21 a.m. on 24 April rays of the sun passed through the 2½ tonne Anzac memorial—which stands proudly in front of Swansea RSL club and overlooks Swansea Heads—marking this historic moment and the triumphal return of the Swansea Dawn Service. As members of this House stood at their respective memorial services on Anzac Day, we honoured the ability of our fellow Australians to stand by each other just as our Anzacs did and to hold true to the values they held and the legacy they left. Time is no test of remembrance. One hundred years on, we honour them for their service by remembering their stories and admiring their ability to overcome adversity. We draw strength from unity and pay tribute to their sacrifice which allows us to experience peace and freedom.

I come from a family of merchant mariners. On the Centenary of Anzac, I took a moment to reflect upon the great contribution of our merchant mariners in all wars, in particular the contribution that they made during World War I. To be a merchant mariner during such an unrelenting and brutal conflict must have been a harrowing experience. It was a conflict where the strength of sea power was still considered to be a reflection of the might of a nation and where victory at sea was proof of that. I am proud to speak about the positive contribution of our merchant mariners to the Australian wartime effort. In wartime, nations look towards their merchant ships for sea lift capabilities in the transportation of military personnel, equipment and supplies, whenever and to wherever they are required. These shipments provided the service men and women for the duration with the necessary arms and ammunition, fuel and food, and all the paraphernalia of war, and then brought them safely back home again once all was said and done.

Almost 80 vessels served our nation under the Red Ensign, crewed or officiated by Australian Merchant Mariners, along with a number of steam tugs and steamers. Some were sunk, almost all came under fire, and many experienced massive loss of life and limb. The vessels that served our nation were made up of, in the majority, ships that were on the Australian register when World War I broke out and a number of ships that were captured from the enemy in or near Australia ports, as well as a fleet of cargo vessels purchased by the Commonwealth Government in 1916. Those ex-enemy vessels, though

registered in London as the property of the King, were lent to the Australian Navy department and under new names were employed from the end of 1914 onward in carrying troops, horses and cargo. Manned by Australian officers and seamen, these ships were transferred to the Commonwealth Government line in 1918.

It is a sad fact that the first person to be killed in World War I was a merchant seaman, when his ship was sunk by gunfire from a German submarine in the North Atlantic. In World War II, again the first combat fatality was a merchant seaman, when a German U-boat sank the liner *Athenia* off the coast of Ireland resulting in a heavy loss of life of both crew and passengers. The last person to die after the cessation of hostilities with Germany was also a merchant seaman, when his ship was torpedoed in the North Atlantic three days after the war ended. It is not generally known that all hospital ships, royal fleet auxiliaries and armed merchant cruisers were crewed by merchant seamen who sailed under the Red Ensign, the Blue Ensign and the White Ensign. Whether they were on passenger liners, troopships, ocean-going tugs, cargo ships, cross-channel ferries or fishing boats, the merchant seamen did their job without fuss and very often went largely unnoticed.

Naval vessels are specially designed to absorb damage from enemy attack and their crews are highly trained in damage control and gunnery. However, merchant ships were not built for war and merchant seamen were not trained for war. Merchant vessels were not well equipped for war and not prepared for the massive loss of life. During the Gallipoli campaign the majority of wounded were taken in lifeboats, with merchant seamen manning the oars, to the hospital ships waiting offshore. Merchant ships evacuated most of our troops from Gallipoli to Alexandria, Lemnos and Cyprus and then transported the wounded home to Australia. The contribution of our merchant seafarers during World War I is often overlooked. In World War I alone, 14,661 officers and men of merchant ships were killed and 3,295 were taken prisoner.

With one in eight seafarers killed during the war, the loss of life was enormous and on a scale that outstrips the service-to-death ratio of all other contributors to the war. Merchant ships transported our troops to Gallipoli and in many cases landed our troops on the beach at Anzac Cove in the ships' lifeboats, coming under deadly fire from the Turkish guns. What sort of men were the merchant seamen who had these experiences? Most were ordinary everyday seamen, untrained for war and unprepared for what befell them—usually an explosion in the middle of the night. When a merchant ship was sunk, the seaman's pay stopped on the day of the sinking. He did not receive any more pay until he joined another ship. The seaman was given 30 days survivor's leave, dated from the day his ship was sunk. This leave was unpaid. It meant that he did not have to report back to the pool for 30 days but if he spent 10 or 15 days in a lifeboat or on a life raft, that time was counted as survivor's leave.

Swansea is an electorate steeped in maritime history. While we do not know exactly how many people from the electorate of Swansea served, I have no doubt that there were many. Arthur W. Jose's *The Royal Australian Navy 1914-1918* provides a commentary on each of the merchant ships employed in Government war service. Throughout these accounts it is striking to note the number of times the Port of Newcastle was mentioned. With the indulgence of the House, I will recount the service of a few vessels in order to lay bare the variety of expeditions as well as the harsh reality of service as a merchant mariner in World War I. The *Bakara* was originally a German-built steamer named *Cannstatt* but was seized in August 1914 on Germany's entry into World War I whilst lying at anchor in Brisbane. Renamed and then fitted out at Williamstown in Melbourne, the *Bakara* was converted predominately into a horse transport ship, accommodating six officers, 120 other ranks and 348 stalls for horses.

After being fitted out, the *Bakara* sailed to Albany, ready for departure to the Middle East and Gallipoli. A 16-vessel fleet of Australian and New Zealand ships departed on 31 December 1914 with the Second Australian Imperial Forces convoy aboard. However, the *Bakara* was not among them. It was due to be part of the convoy but a coal bunker fire prevented her departure. Upon repair, the *Bakara* caught up with the convoy on 29 January 1915 at the Suez Canal. The second convoy transported 11,305 brave young Australians and New Zealanders and 4,643 horses to the First World War. Their lives were in

danger as the convoy navigated the Suez Canal, with the Turkish forces having moved into the area.

Of course, they faced significant danger from the Turkish forces on their arrival in the Middle East and Gallipoli. The *Bakara* returned to Australia to transport more troops and horses for the Imperial Force's efforts, arriving at the Port of Newcastle and then departing our shores on 22 May 1915. The *Boonah*, formerly the German-Australian liner *Melbourne* of Hamburg, was captured at Sydney at the outbreak of the war. Fitted as a transport vessel for the second convoy, she sailed from Newcastle on 18 December with 110 troops and 465 horses. By February 1917, she had made three more trips with troops from Australia to Egypt and England, and had visited Glasgow, Naples, Marseilles—being chased by a submarine en route—Port Said, Pensacola and New York carrying or to pick up cargo.

On 10 March 1917, when bound for Dakar, she sank a German submarine off Erris Head on the west coast of Ireland. At about 6 o'clock that evening, as he was leaving the bridge, the master observed over his shoulder a faint puff of steam or vapour on the ship's port quarter. Deciding to take no risk, the master gave the order to put the helm hard-a-port, so as to bring the ship right astern. Then, perceiving it to be a half-submerged submarine, he signalled for the 4.7 inch gun, which was mounted aft, to open fire. At this time the *Boonah* was travelling at a little over 10 knots, but the submarine, doing 12 to 15 knots, began to gain on her. The first shot from the *Boonah*'s gun landed short by some 300 yards, the second by 150 yards. The third, however, seemed to hit the submarine, with a shower of sparks flying upwards as the shell exploded.

The *Boonah* then continued on her original course, but her crew was surprised some minutes later when the submarine appeared on her starboard beam. Again opening fire, with her second shell she struck the water close beside the submarine; the third appeared to burst on the conning tower, and was followed by a bright flash and a dense cloud of smoke. The enemy was not seen again. Resuming her voyage, the *Boonah* was sent from Dakar to Lagos, and there embarked 2,000 Nigerian troops for Dar-es-Salaam. On the way, however, an epidemic of chickenpox broke out on board and the vessel was detained in quarantine on arrival. She then returned to Australia by way of Zanzibar and Mauritius. The *Australdale*, formerly the Burrell liner *Struthendrick* of Glasgow, was taken over by the Commonwealth on 11 June 1916 at Calcutta while running under Admiralty requisition.

Reaching Sydney at the beginning of October, she filled up with zinc concentrates, lead, copra and other cargo and sailed on 11 November for London via South Africa. After being fitted with wireless she sailed in the following February for Queensland. She next carried rails for the transcontinental railway and coal from Newcastle to Fremantle, and then sailed for France with a full shipment of wheat and wool. On 19 October 1917, while proceeding in convoy to Gibraltar and carrying coal from Wales, she was torpedoed and sunk 165 miles north-west from Cape Vilano, on the northwest coast of Spain. The crew left the ship in three boats. One of these, a lifeboat in which were the majority of officers and men, was never seen again. The other two reached the French coast within 50 miles of each other. By the time they landed, the occupants were suffering from a skin infection of the ears, face, hands and feet, and two deaths occurred on the way. In all, 27 lives were lost. It is a very sad tale of merchant mariners lost in war.

These are the experiences of just three vessels that served our nation during World War I. Death, disease, shipwrecked, even being bombed by a zeppelin, the life of a merchant mariner in World War I was never dull. Records are conflicting on the total number of people embarking from Newcastle during the First World War but they suggest that somewhere between 414 and 516 people embarked from the Port of Newcastle. In addition, some 3,100 horses boarded in Newcastle. Today at Norah Head and in Newcastle we remember the sacrifices of our merchant mariners lost in times of war at our annual commemoration services. These commemoration ceremonies and the established memorials that accompany them are two of the best in this country. At Norah Head, thanks must go to convenors Neil Rose and Graeme Bissaker, members of the Merchant Mariners Organising Committee and the Norah Head Lighthouse Trust, and also to the many other organisations and individuals whom I do not have enough time to individually thank for their efforts in organising this memorial. [*Extension of time agreed*]

to.]

I thank the Hon. Peter Morris, former Minister for Transport in the Hawke Federal Government, for his tireless advocacy to ensure that our merchant mariners are recognised year after year with the annual commemoration in Newcastle. In 1998, during the annual Memorial Service, Peter remarked:

Our region is rich in maritime heritage. Our nation and our wealth were borne out of shipping. They have developed on the shoulders of the shipping industry. Their future rests on shipping and I hope that it will be a future in which Australian shipping will play an expanding role.

For over 200 years we have crewed ships, serviced ships, designed ships, built and repaired ships in peace and war.

I could not have put it better myself. I finish by citing a poem by Captain Peter Boswell that is dedicated to the memory of the sacrifices made by Australian and International merchant seafarers in contributing to Australia's prosperity and peace:

No cross marks the graves where now we lie
What happened is known but to us
You asked, and we gave our lives to defend
Our land from the enemy curse
No Flanders Field where poppies blow;
No Gleaming Crosses, row on row,
No Unnamed Tomb for all to see
And pause, and wonder who we might be
The sailors' Valhalla is where we lie
On the ocean bed, watching ships pass by
Sailing, in safety now thru the waves
Often right over our sea-locked graves
We ask you just to remember us.

On this day we will remember them.

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [4.16 p.m.]: I quote from the poem *Icarus*:

Dimmed by the passing of a hundred years
Our memories go cold,
Yet, the soldiers who died on the beaches
Fought too hard for our lives to grow old.

That is the opening stanza of the poem *Icarus*, written by Therese Horsfall, then a year 11 student at St Mary MacKillop College Albury. It represented the start of an adventure for her and three friends. In 2014 the New South Wales Government announced there would be a ballot across New South Wales to select 100 high school students to make the trip to Gallipoli for the Centenary of Anzac. They would attend the Dawn Service at the Anzac commemorative site and the Australian Memorial Service at Lone Pine in Turkey on 25 April. The Government invested \$1 million in the program. St Mary MacKillop College Albury, which is located in the town of Jindera, was one of 25 schools chosen by ballot in September last year to go on the tour.

Later, in October, I was privileged to sit on the panel that was formed to choose four suitable students from the school. The four selected students were Therese Horsfall, Catherine Bell, Bede McLaurin and Kate Whitehead. Each student had to prepare a sample of work that related to one of the nominated topics relevant to the centenary. Therese Horsfall wrote the poem *Icarus*, which brought imagery and imagination into play. Catherine Bell painted a scene depicting an Australian soldier

embracing his son upon his arrival home. Catherine said:

I was inspired to paint this because of my experiences with my father leaving home. He was in the army and went overseas to Afghanistan and Pakistan for a total of around nine months. I understand how this little boy [the one in the painting] felt when his father left; how he felt while he was away and I know the happiness he felt when his father finally returned home.

Kate Whitehead wrote an essay about the Gallipoli campaign and its context in World War I, along with the development of the Anzac character forged in that struggle. "There were certain qualities that soldiers from different countries displayed, characteristic of the society each came from," she wrote. Bede McLaurin delivered an essay focusing on the "soldier's war", and in particular on the wartime experience of his paternal great-grandfather, James McLaurin, who, although he did not fight in the Gallipoli campaign, served on the Western Front.

James McLaurin was born in Germanton, a town in my electorate of Albury which changed its name to Holbrook in 1915 as a result of the war. Interestingly, the Holbrook in question was Royal Navy Lieutenant Norman Holbrook, who, in December 1914, guided a British B class submarine HMS *B11* below a minefield in the Dardanelles to torpedo and sink the Turkish battleship *Mesudiye*. The story spread like wildfire and his name replaced that of Germanton, New South Wales. Lieutenant Holbrook was awarded the Victoria Cross [VC] and the French Legion of Honour. I understand that Holbrook is the only town in Australia to be named after a VC winner. It is a story that ties intimately with the Centenary of Anzac and the Gallipoli campaign. In his application Bede McLaurin cited the words by which his ancestor James was recommended for a Distinguished Conduct Medal:

At Vauvillers on 22nd August 1918 for most consistent gallantry and devotion to duty. He helped in extinguishing camouflage and exploding ammunition in a gun pit which was on fire: the position was being heavily shelled with 8-inch at the time. Again in the afternoon when the position was under 8-inch fire, at great personal risk he shepherded his men into safety, being himself the last to leave. Later on in the evening he was foremost in removing the wounded under heavy shell fire. During the whole of these events Sergeant McLaurin displayed the utmost coolness and resourcefulness and showed a very fine example to all ranks.

These were the four students chosen from St Mary MacKillop College. Over the course of their nine-day trip the students went to many places they had previously only read about: the beaches, landmarks, trenches and, of course, the cemeteries of Gallipoli. As one student is reported as saying in the *News Weekly*, "We saw cemeteries everywhere, cemeteries upon cemeteries, upon bodies upon tragedies upon everything." Students remarked about the sense of peace they felt at Gallipoli, even when walking on the battleground and contemplating those who fought and died in the trenches. It was an opportunity to think about the huge loss of life, and to reflect on the values of the Anzacs and whether we hold the same values today. Their accompanying history teacher, Ross Miller, acknowledged the respect the Turkish people had for Australians. "We are really firm friends over there," he said. In his reflections on the trip to Gallipoli Mr Miller wrote:

Many feelings filtered through the soul as our pilgrimage to Gallipoli eventually arrived.

Firstly: Gratitude—Our school, myself, students and the community were so grateful for being chosen and given this once in a lifetime opportunity. This gratitude matured into a much more patriotic vein when we stood on the bushy battlefields that gave us the backbone of our national identity. A very moving experience was when our NSW tour group stood as one at Shrapnel Valley cemetery and sang the national anthem after listening to the last post. How thankful we were for the Anzacs, for being Australian, for our friendship with Turkey and our mateship.

Secondly: The sense of collective solidarity as we walked among the fields that shaped Australia with fellow Australians.

Thirdly: The deep sense of solemn awareness that permeated through every activity of what we experienced: from the Turks selling Gallipoli paraphernalia, to the stories of the fellow Australians who had made the pilgrimage to Anzac cove to commemorate the centenary of what Australians probably consider the most important date on our calendar.

Then there was the sense of adventure and joy of travelling and meeting new people, which must have mirrored some of the feelings of our first soldiers who were sent there.

The friendships and experiences gained on this journey will live with us forever and will foster both within me and those I meet, a deep sense of awareness of what it actually means to be an Australian.

Thanks to the Federal and NSW governments for this initiative. It will be treasured for a long time and perhaps there will be other projects like this to help our younger generations experience on a deeper level what our past Australians have been through and suffered out of love for and in defence of our country.

I will share with members the short reports that each student prepared on their return home from the tour. Year 10 student Kate Whitehead wrote:

The 2015 Gallipoli Schools Tour was an amazing, moving and memorable experience for me. Although it was tiring, I would do it again in a heartbeat.

I learnt many things on this trip. It taught me about the ANZAC soldiers and how tough the Gallipoli Campaign must have been for them. It has made me appreciate all that those brave men and women did for us, without having to read it in a textbook. It was amazing to see all the sites so untouched after 100 years and know that so many people died there and that now this is a place where Australians can come and be at peace. This trip taught me more about the Turkish perspective, too, as well as seeing how close our two countries have become.

I have learnt that the ANZAC Spirit must have been a tremendous attribute to the Australian soldiers during the War, especially when times got hard. I also learnt to recognise that same spirit in the Australian people today and that it could be clearly seen in all who participated in both the Tour and any ANZAC Day services.

I have come back to Australia with a lot more respect for both Turkish and ANZAC soldiers as well as a newfound sense of identity. I can see now just how lucky I am to call Australia my home and I can proudly say that my people fought at Gallipoli in 1915 and that their spirit resonates through history and is present in our country today.

Bede McLaurin, who is now in year 12, wrote:

On the 18th of April 2015, I set out for what was to be a journey of a lifetime. In hindsight I realise it was much more than that; this emotional, physical, spiritual and cultural journey led me to new ideas and perspectives about myself and Australia's identity. The fact "ordinary men doing extraordinary things" was quoted from Tony Abbott in his speech at Lone Pine, and the comment that ANZAC cove was a bastard of a place, really hit home to me. Whilst crossing the Dardanelles from Chanakale to Gallipoli, I took note that on each ferry was inscribed a slogan stating, "Peace is Possible". This just goes to show the acknowledgement and the transition made between Australia and the Turkish nations over 100 years. The level of peace, respect, pride and honour shown for both nations is commendable. My favourite part of the Gallipoli school tour was the personal memories and encounters I was left with: Literally standing on the battle field where thousands of soldiers shed their blood, their sacrifice really meant something. The NSW tour

group sang the National anthem with pride followed by a minute silence. This was a very emotional, solemn and humbling experience, one that brought a tear to my eye; a moment capturing the ANZAC spirit, this will be passed on. Hence, I was reflecting on their sacrifice and my Australian identity that lives within each and every Australian; one of mateship, honour, pride, courage, Christianity and respect but also enabling us to live in a free country in peace. To commemorate such values and sacrifice but to be able to pass the ANZAC legend/spirit onto all future generations, is important. This is what I will endeavour to do, and act on this as a duty to pass on the ANZAC spirit to future generations.

"Greater Love hath no man then to have layed down his life for his friend" "duty done" LEST WE FORGET.

Catherine Bell, who is also in year 12, wrote:

I never once dreamed of visiting the country where our forebears' blood was spilt in a desperate attempt to invade Turkey. This epic battle was merely a school room tale, simply facts that I had to memorise, but now it is real! I realised this while standing at the edge of the Aegean Sea at a place commonly known as V-beach. This particular beach is seemingly untouched and looks very similar to what it was at the time of the landing. At this beach so many thousands of soldiers died as to stain the sea red with their blood. I had spent around three days exploring other ANZAC battlefields and cemeteries by this time. Wandering the rows of headstones and reading the soldiers names at Lone Pine and Plugge's Plateau, was a very sobering experience. The most exhilarating though tiring, experience, of our tour was being present at the Dawn and Lone Pine services. The speeches of Prince Charles, Prince Harry and the Prime Minister were told with feeling and love, I noticed this more at the Lone Pine Service, because my weariness had finally begun to wear off. Australia itself has become more precious to me from leaving it and its history more real. The ANZAC's are no longer just legendary men, they are real people, like my father and my brothers and all my friends. Turkey is a wonderful place, full of generous and good-willed people, like our tour guide Semhi. I met some of the most beautiful people on this trip, friends I hope never to lose touch with. I can never thank the Australian government, coordinators and organisers of this trip enough for giving me such a lovely experience to treasure for the rest of my life.

Having opened with the poem of Therese Horsfall before her adventure began, it is telling to conclude by looking at her words as her Gallipoli adventure ended. Her application poem looked to the Icarus myth. She wrote, "Too brave for admitting defeat, they flew too close to the sun. Steel feathers melted in showers of shot ..." In verse Therese focused on bravery, on England's gamble and Australia's loss. She ended with the words, "Those dead men still blaze and inspire." Upon returning from Gallipoli, Therese put pen to paper once more. This time in text, not verse. Her imagery is of a dawn about to break and the "uncertainty and assurance of these boys and men, who laid down their lives for the hope of a new Dawn." She asks, "Did they hope for the dawn of peace ...? Did they wait for the dawn of Australian identity, seeded from the blood they sprinkled on the beaches?" Therese found hope in the rising spirits of those who waited with her at the centenary dawn service in April 2015.

Pursuant to sessional order business interrupted and set down as an order of the day for a future day.

Pursuant to sessional order discussion on petition signed by 10,000 or more persons proceeded with.

HOLROYD LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA PROPOSED AMALGAMATION

Discussion on Petition Signed by 10,000 or More Persons

Mr LUKE FOLEY (Auburn—Leader of the Opposition) [4.32 p.m.]: It is with much pleasure that I speak in support of the petition that I brought to this Parliament, signed by more than 10,000 persons, opposing the amalgamation of the Holroyd local government area and requesting that it remain independent. I welcome the Mayor of Holroyd City Council, Mr Greg Cummings, to the public gallery and with him other concerned citizens from the Holroyd council area. Holroyd City Council area has a population of more than 100,000 people—it was around 104,000 in 2011. In 2013-14 it had operating revenue of \$83 million. The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] has recently assessed all councils in New South Wales. I draw the attention of the House to the fact that IPART has found that the Holroyd council satisfies the overall financial criteria, the sustainability criteria, the infrastructure and service management criteria, and the efficiency criteria. Indeed, one would have to say it is in good shape, but IPART was forced to find Holroyd council unfit due to scale and capacity.

We know that IPART's hands were tied on the question of scale and capacity—the Government handed it a statutory declaration in its terms of reference. This local government area in the middle ring of Sydney is in good shape. It has been assessed on grounds of financial criteria, sustainability, infrastructure, service management and efficiency, and has passed all of those benchmarks. As I have said, the council is in good shape and it serves its community well. By 2031 its population is forecast to be 136,000. Under the very arbitrary population benchmark that this Government has imposed by political diktat, IPART was forced to find Holroyd City Council unfit for the future.

What an Orwellian concept it is that this council, which ticks every box in its finances, service delivery, efficiency and responsiveness to its citizenry, is ruled unfit for the future because of a government stitch-up that imposes an arbitrary population benchmark on all local government areas—certainly in metropolitan Sydney. I refer to the report of the Legislative Council inquiry released today. That inquiry found, in relation to the government-imposed criterion concerning scale and capacity, that the criterion "was ill-defined and difficult to objectively measure". The report states:

Accordingly, it was not an appropriate criterion to include in the Fit for the Future assessment criteria.

The multiparty Legislative Council inquiry called on the New South Wales Government "to commit to a policy of no forced amalgamations of local councils". The petition before us was signed by more than 10,000 persons. Perhaps that is the clearest indication we can have that this council, as it is currently constituted, is responsive to its citizenry—namely, in an area of 100,000 people, 10,000 of them are willing to sign a petition to save their council. Indeed, that is the clearest possible indication that this Government should leave this well-performing council alone. There is a far greater reform agenda for local government than putting a gun at their head and forcing them to merge on arbitrary population grounds. Let us introduce donation caps. Why is it that Mike Baird and I can run for Premier and be subject to strict limits, but one can run for a ward in the Auburn council or any other suburban council and the sky is the limit? I commend the petition to the House.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting. The discussion will not continue until there is silence. I call the member for Prospect to order for the second time.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.37 p.m.]: I am delighted to speak to this petition. I acknowledge that the mayor of Holroyd is seated in the gallery. If ever there is an example of why local government reform is needed, it is the example of Holroyd City Council. Why is that?

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The Leader of the Opposition was heard in silence. That courtesy will be extended to every member who makes a contribution to this discussion.

Mr MATT KEAN: If ever there were a need for local government reform, it is in the city of Holroyd. We have seen example after example of councillors being more focused on themselves than on

the people they were elected to serve—for example, the mayor's commitment to upgrade the town centre of Wentworthville. He described it as like putting lipstick on a pig. Instead of spending money on delivering better services and better infrastructure for his community, he would rather spend ratepayer dollars on keeping his little sinecure in Holroyd happening. Rather than delivering for his community, he is more interested in keeping the games going in Holroyd council—games like Councillor Sarkis and Councillor Ritchie fighting in the council chambers.

Ms Anna Watson: Point of order: This petition is about saving Holroyd council; it is not directed at the mayor.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! What is the member's point of order?

Ms Anna Watson: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. The member is directing his argument at the mayor of Holroyd council. The petition is about saving Holroyd council; it is not a character assassination of the mayor.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! There is no point of order. The member for Shellharbour will resume her seat.

Mr MATT KEAN: I acknowledge all of those who have signed this petition. I am sure they had genuine concerns about their community—based on what they had read in the media and the misleading ratepayer-funded campaign that was undertaken by the mayor and the councillors in order to protect their jobs. If they are doing such a good job, why are they hiring cops to police litter? Why are they ripping money out of heritage buildings?

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: I do apologise—

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! What is the member's point of order?

Mr Greg Warren: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. It is not appropriate for the member for Hornsby to use this debate as an opportunity to attack the mayor.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! There is no point of order. The member for Hornsby has the call.

Mr MATT KEAN: Local government reform is all about delivering more services and better infrastructure at lower cost to ratepayers. What is Holroyd City Council's solution for reform? It is to raise rates for the people of Holroyd. The mayor and his council colleagues are imposing a 44 per cent rate increase on the citizens of Holroyd over the next five years. Rather than look at the option that this Government has put on the table—an extra \$250 million over the next 20 years—the council wants to slug its ratepayers with extra taxes so that it can indulge in hiring police to patrol for litter, organise fundraisers instead of attending council meetings, as Councillor Sarkis did, and take money away from heritage buildings. That is its idea of local government reform. That is its idea of how to treat ratepayers.

We on this side of the House will not stand for that. We are putting forward proposals to make life better for the people of Holroyd. If the mayor and his cronies in the Labor Party will not be part of that, we will not stand by and watch the ratepayers of the community being screwed. Local government needs to deliver better services and infrastructure. The mayor of Holroyd is after the member for Granville's job. She presented the petition to the Leader of the Opposition rather than to local members. This petition is about the mayor positioning himself for a future tilt at the member for Granville's job. We on this side of the House are interested in looking after the residents of Holroyd by delivering more infrastructure and better services at lower cost. We will not condone wasting ratepayers' dollars on protecting the mayor's job. We will fight for the residents of Holroyd.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Shellharbour will come to order.

Mr MATT KEAN: We will fight on behalf of the residents of Holroyd for the upgrade of Wentworthville, which we think residents deserve. We will fight the closure of the Wentworthville pool. We will stand up for residents and we have a plan to do it. What is Holroyd City Council's plan? It is to raise rates and put its head in the sand. That is unacceptable. Reform is needed and we say bring it on.

Mr Luke Foley: It has not been your finest day in this place, has it?

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! It has not been the Leader of the Opposition's finest day either.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) [4.42 p.m.]: I wholeheartedly support Holroyd City Council in its opposition to forced amalgamation, and I support the "Hands off Holroyd" petition before the House today. Gazetted in 1872 as the Municipal District of Prospect and Sherwood, and renamed in 1927, Holroyd City Council has served the community well for more than 140 years. With 111,000 residents and 40,000 local jobs, the city of Holroyd is growing rapidly. It has the scale and capacity to continue to operate as a stand-alone council. If it did not, either its finances or its infrastructure would be suffering now—and neither is. Analysis of the merged council model found that costs would increase, primarily because of the integration of information technology. Consultants Morrison Low found that costs would rise for Holroyd residents by \$257 per annum under a merger. That is not because Parramatta's rates are higher; in fact, they are about the same.

The difference lies in the make-work exercise of an unnecessary merger and the integration costs associated with it. The costs will not be offset by holding only one Australia Day event and cancelling the annual Parramatta versus Holroyd cricket match. Savings will need to be found elsewhere or funded through increased rates and charges. Amalgamation would threaten many of the unique services provided by both councils. Those services would need to be extended across a larger council or cut, in the interests of fairness and equity. They include Parramatta's free lawn mowing service for aged pensioners; Holroyd's popular and unique PetFest, which promotes responsible pet ownership; Holroyd's assistance with small-scale asbestos removal; and Holroyd's out of-school-hours childcare services.

Today we have seen the release of a report by a committee in the other place that is scathing of the Fit for the Future process. It goes so far as to call on the Government to withdraw its statement that 71 per cent of Sydney councils and 56 per cent of country councils are unfit for the future. This is not surprising. Holroyd, like Parramatta and many other Sydney councils, was found to be unfit on only one criterion—that of having sufficient scale and capacity. Scale and capacity has never been clearly defined, but its implied meaning is that an area should have a sufficiently large population to support and sustain council operations. The committee described it as "ill-defined and difficult to measure" and suggested that it was an inappropriate measure of fitness.

Rates are levied on properties, not on population numbers, so the scale and capacity argument is spurious. Even so, Holroyd cannot be considered a small council, with so many residents and high population growth. The number of residents is expected to reach 168,000 by 2036. Holroyd is one of the few councils that have been meeting the dwelling targets under the metropolitan strategy. I have spoken to dozens of Holroyd residents, before and since the March election, who oppose the council amalgamation. By all means, the Government should sack, amalgamate or restructure the ward systems of those councils that bring the entire tier of local government into disrepute, but it should keep its hands off Holroyd. It is a good council and it is doing a good job of listening to its residents.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI (Drummoyne—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.45 p.m.]: The Labor Party has form on amalgamations.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Opposition members seem to have an agenda to interject during speeches. The member for Granville was heard in silence. I demand that the member for Drummoyne be heard in silence.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: I am happy to speak in discussion on the petition. I respect the petition but I do not support it.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Blacktown does not know about respect.

Mr JOHN SIDOTI: Despite four years of extensive consultation and review, despite all the evidence before us that Sydney has too many councils and that something needs to change, some councils are still not prepared to embrace that change. They would rather hand their communities huge rate rises. They would prefer to spend the money they receive from ratepayers on trying to convince their communities to be afraid of mergers and afraid of the future, rather than exploring the real benefits that such changes can bring.

No council in Sydney should frighten its community through ratepayer-funded scare campaigns. That is what a select group of councils across Sydney is doing. The information presented by Holroyd City Council in its submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal clearly showed a net benefit from the merger proposal—\$254 million by IPART's calculations. Despite this, the council continues to regale its community with outrageous claims of massive job losses, loss of services and increased charges if a merger occurs.

This Government has made every effort to work collaboratively with the local government sector on these important reforms, but it is clear that some councils are not prepared to put their communities first. Some councils continue to ignore the findings of the Independent Local Government Review Panel, and some did not want to hear what IPART had to say about them in its final assessment. The independent panel, appointed at the request of the local government sector, consulted widely. It commissioned studies into the connections between Sydney's communities and the way in which our global city will grow in the future. The panel came to the conclusion that Holroyd and its neighbours had many aspects in common and would benefit from joining forces to strengthen their position.

Holroyd City Council's response was to ignore the panel's findings and embark on a ratepayer-funded anti-merger campaign—a campaign that has led to the signatures before us today. I acknowledge the genuine concerns of the people of Holroyd who signed the petition. If the Government honestly believed that mergers would lead to the outrageous outcomes claimed by Holroyd City Council then it would not support them either. But that is not the case. Large councils can serve Sydney well. It is time for councils in Sydney to come clean and face the facts in the IPART report.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Discussion on the 10,000 signature petition having concluded, community recognition statements will be proceeded with.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: I was seeking leave to speak on the petition.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! You did not seek leave.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: You did not give me a chance to. I live in Holroyd; it is my council and I would like to speak on it.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! Is leave granted?

Leave not granted.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Blacktown is lucky to be in the Chamber, following his comments regarding a particular community and his hand actions during the debate.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: You are gagging me, Mr Deputy-Speaker, is that what you are saying?

Mr Chris Patterson: Point of order: Just so that everybody is clear: I am not sure what the standing order is but I asked the member for Campbelltown to find out if anybody wanted to seek leave to speak in the discussion so that we could accommodate them. I was told that nobody did. About eight minutes ago I asked the question and I was told no. This is just a show.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! The member for Prospect stood at the table and did not say one word. When a member jumps to their feet they say, "Mr Deputy-Speaker, I seek leave", but the member for Prospect did not; he just stood there.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: I never had an opportunity.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I did not rule that the member would be denied leave to speak. Are there any community recognition statements?

Mr Greg Warren: To the point of order: I seek leave to speak to the point of order taken by the member for Camden, the Government Whip. He is quite correct; he did ask me that.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! I have already asked whether there are any community recognition statements.

Pursuant to sessional order recognition statements proceeded with.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENTS

WOLLONDILLY KNIGHTS SENIOR AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [4.53 p.m.]: I inform the House that the Wollondilly Knights Senior Australian Football Club won the AFL Sydney division four premiership after its 6.6 (42) to 5.6 (36) win over Macquarie University at Blacktown International Sportspark, Rooty Hill, on Saturday. The Knights were scoreless at the end of the first quarter as Timothy Cameron gave the university a 2.2 (14) to 0.0 (0) lead. Andre Stamoulos scored the Knights' first goal in the second corner and helped reduce the university's lead. The university scored the first three goals in the third quarter, but the Knights recovered and trailed 5.4 (34) to 3.6 (24) as they headed into the final quarter. Shaun Paget, Russell Andrews and David Wolfe made the most of their chances in front of the goal to give the Knights a six-point win. I acknowledge club president Russell Andrews, goal kickers Benjamin Robinson, Shaun Paget, David Wolfe, Andre Stamoulos, Russell Andrews, Jay Hamilton, and best players Rhys Hamilton, Daniel Hockey, James Weston, Russell Andrews, Chad Fitzsimmons and Shaun Paget.

HOLROYD CITY COUNCIL

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) [4.54 p.m.]: I acknowledge Holroyd council—a well-run, efficient council that is an outstanding example to other councils in Western Sydney. I have always found it to be an amazing council that looks after my rubbish, looks after my children's child care and looks after the immunisation programs in Holroyd. I always find it amusing when toffs from Drummoyne and Hornsby decide that they want to try to destroy a well-run council.

Mr Jai Rowell: Point of order: The member is using unparliamentary language.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): Order! There is no point of order.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: I thank Holroyd council and I look forward to its continued existence not only today but into the future. I look forward to working with council members, and fighting with them and the thousands upon thousands of Holroyd residents who support the council.

TRIBUTE TO ETHAN MARSH AND SEINA HATAZOE

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.55 p.m.]: Today I congratulate a young Clarence Valley couple who have made it their mission to clean up the roads within the Clarence Valley. Ethan Marsh and Seina Hatazoe recently started a movement on Facebook called "Highway Hippies" to get people involved in cleaning up other peoples' rubbish left on the sides of our roads. The Clarence Valley and, in fact, the North Coast, is one of the most beautiful regions in Australia. If we want our kids and grandkids to enjoy this beautiful country I encourage everyone to take a leaf out of Ethan's and Seina's book and do their bit to clean up Australia. And remember: Do the right thing—put your rubbish in the bin.

TORCH ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF DAY

Ms TANIA MIHAILUK (Bankstown) [4.55 p.m.]: On 23 October 2015 I was honoured to attend the 2015 Torch sixth annual Charity Golf Day, which has been growing consistently from its inception, to support much-needed cancer research. To date, the event has raised approximately \$112,000 for the Australian Cancer Research Foundation, providing integral funds for cancer research. The day was a great success, with just over \$29,000 raised at the event. Participants enjoyed a day of golf and lunch in combination with various other activities. I congratulate managing director John Engisch, general manager Trent Engisch and the entire Engisch family on their dedicated passion in ensuring the success of this wonderful event. I also acknowledge the Georges River Golf Club for hosting the event; Daniel Anderson, the veteran from Parramatta rugby league for being guest speaker; Professor Ian Brown from the Australian Cancer Research Foundation and his team; and Mark Newey, the auctioneer. It was a wonderful day and I congratulate all the participants, including the small businesses, that were in attendance.

ALBURY ELECTORATE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [4.56 p.m.]: Congratulations to Emma Aldrich, a student at Xavier High School, Albury, who was awarded the Dame Marie Bashir Peace Award. Emma has worked at a remote Aboriginal community in the outback, has helped at a Vinnies camp for disadvantaged children, and has assisted children with learning difficulties and autism. Well done Emma! Congratulations to Tumbarumba Pharmacy, which came second in the Pharmacy Choice Awards 2015. The pharmacy excelled in product range, staff training, competitive pricing, store presentation, mystery shopping and the efficiency of the dispensary. Well done to all the staff! Well done to Julianna Kettle who won gold in the Retail Baking Pastry category at the Riverina World Skills competition, baking a variety of wonderful delights including eclairs, choux pastries, chocolate fillings and Swiss sponge rolls. All the best Julianna when she competes in the World Skills competition to be held next year.

BALLINA MARINE RESCUE UNIT

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) [4.57 p.m.]: I acknowledge the incredible service of the Ballina Marine Rescue Unit under the command of Commander John Donoghue. The 24-hour-a-day unit is one of the busiest in the State, with the highest user participation rate in New South Wales. It is wholly run by volunteers. Ninety-five percent of marine users in Ballina waters log on and off with the unit when heading out, which demonstrates the high level of trust and respect for the service. Last week I had the privilege of celebrating with volunteers from the unit at the announcement of funding for the construction of a new

marine tower.

The volunteers have raised \$150,000 for the fit-out of the new watchtower, having spent decades operating in substandard conditions in what has become known in my community as the "leaning tower". I particularly recognise the commitment of veteran volunteers including Commander John Donoghue, Kevin Thompson and, of course, the ladies who pioneered the rescue vessel's first female crew, the River Rats. Whether it is supporting commercial fishers or private boaters, the Ballina community at large appreciates every effort of these volunteers, and I too look forward to continuing my support for them as the member for Ballina.

TRIBUTE TO CANOWINDRA FIRE CAPTAIN BILL PAUL

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange—Parliamentary Secretary) [4.58 p.m.]: I congratulate long-time Canowindra Fire Captain Bill Paul, who has earned his third clasp in recognition of his diligent long service. The clasp is presented every 10 years after the initial earning of the National Medal, which is earned at the 15-year milestone. With the three clasps and medal, Bill has now served a total of 45 years as a firefighter with Fire and Rescue NSW. Bill joined Fire and Rescue NSW at Canowindra as a Retained Firefighter in 1969. Less than 10 years later he was appointed captain, a position which he continues to hold.

Only two years ago, in June 2013, Bill was the recipient of an Australian Fire Service Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. He is renowned throughout rural New South Wales as a keen advocate for operational training programs, particularly the Firefighting Championships. His crew at Canowindra is recognised as a well-rehearsed and professional emergency service, able to respond readily to all types of emergencies and natural disasters. He has also taken a leading role in delivering fire safety education to local schools, communities and professional groups. Well done to Bill! We thank him for his dedication to the communities of Canowindra and the Central West.

CAMPBELLTOWN MOTOR REGISTRY

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) [4.59 p.m.]: I acknowledge and thank the thousands of residents of Campbelltown and surrounding areas who have signed my petition to keep motor registry services in Campbelltown. I note that the member for Wollondilly did not sign the petition, but did support it. Since launching my petition earlier this year, the response from members of our community who are outraged by this decision from the Government has been overwhelming, to say the least. It has been heartening to see so many members of our community supporting the fight to protect services in Campbelltown, and I thank everyone for taking the time to stand up to the Government by signing my petition. While, sadly, the Government has not taken their concerns into consideration, their efforts have not gone unnoticed by me and many others in our community. I commend each and every one of them for signing our petition and for standing up for better services in our great city.

BEING GREEK FESTIVAL

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) [5.00 p.m.]: On Sunday 25 October I had the pleasure of attending the Being Greek Festival at Carss Bush Park. The Being Greek Festival is a celebration of all things Greek, including culture, music and food. It is one of the most important events on the local Greek calendar. I was delighted that the Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, and State and Federal members of Parliament—the member for Rockdale, the member for Kogarah, the member for Barton, the member for Banks and the member for Miranda, Eleni Petinos, who knows a thing or two about being Greek—were able to attend this great event. The member for Miranda and I also had the pleasure of presenting a cheque for more than \$8,000 from the Baird Government to the organisers of the Being Greek Festival to assist with set-up costs and the running of the festival. The Being Greek Festival celebrates Greek-Australian heritage and acknowledges 28 October 1940, which is Hellenic National Day. It also acknowledges ideas, family, community and collective unity.

AUSTRALIAN KOREAN WELFARE ASSOCIATION

Ms JODI McKAY (Strathfield) [5.01 p.m.]: I bring to the attention of the House the extraordinary efforts of the Australian Korean Welfare Association. I am proud to have the association in my community and I thank its members for all they do for the Korean community. The Australian Korean Welfare Association was established in 1979 to provide settlement programs for newly arrived migrants and to provide support for older people living in Burwood and Strathfield. The organisation recognises the importance of reaching out to those in need of support and friendship. I recognise the president, John Y.J. Lee for his leadership of the association. Like others who support the association, he is a volunteer who gives generously of his time. I also congratulate Helena Lee, Jonson Yoo, Jason Choi, Su Kil Yi, Hoi Woo Yang, Daniel Moon, Chun Man Lee, Richard Chang, Hyun Sang Rho, Han Young Koo and my friend Keith Lee. I congratulate the Australian Korean Welfare Association on its commitment to the Korean community in the Strathfield area.

KU-RING-GAI ELECTORATE CARERS COMMENDATIONS

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) [5.02 p.m.]: I am sure everyone in this Chamber would agree with me that the unsung heroes of our community are our carers. I was very pleased recently to recognise two fine carers in my electorate of Ku-ring-gai by way of high commendations during New South Wales Carers Week. Lynne Brakell from Wahroonga is a carer on numerous fronts. She is the full-time carer for her son, who lives with a mental illness, and her husband, who has a chronic health condition. She also acts as a respected carer for other carers. One of Lynne's great initiatives is helping carers deal with their daily lives through yoga. I also had the pleasure of meeting Sara Spurr from North Turramurra, who has been the full-time carer for her daughter, Lucy, since her birth. Lucy has Aicardi syndrome and is totally reliant on support. Sara also took into her home her father, who recently died of cancer, and her mother, who suffered a stroke several years ago. The self-sacrifice of people like Lynne and Sara, who struck me with their infectious positivity and smiles, is truly something to be applauded.

GRANDPARENTS OF THE YEAR AWARD

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry) [5.03 p.m.]: I recognise St Marys residents Marjorie and Graham Elphick, who have been named the New South Wales Grandparents of the Year as part of Grandparents Day, a celebration of the amazing contribution made by grandparents to their families and communities. Mr and Mrs Elphick were nominated for this award by the North St Marys Neighbourhood Centre for their valued volunteering in the community. This includes their work at St Marys North Public School for the past 45 years, where both their children and grandchildren attended, as well as their continued contribution to the North St Marys Neighbourhood Centre. Mr and Mrs Elphick's hard work and dedicated service to St Marys for the past 45 years is well known in the community and they deserve to be recognised for this work. I again congratulate Marjorie and Graham Elphick on being awarded New South Wales Grandparents of the Year and commend them for their outstanding dedication to the community over all these years.

TERRIGAL SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB MEMBERS RESCUE OF THE MONTH NOMINATION

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) [5.04 p.m.]: Two weeks ago Mr Paul Malone, a local resident of Terrigal, was out walking with his friend along the beach promenade when he collapsed in front of the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club. Fortunately, the quick action of seven surf club members, Liz Hunt, Toni and Annie Jones, Roger Stimson, Michael Gill, John Deacon and former club member Jeff Smith, saved the life of Paul Malone. Using a defibrillator and their cardiopulmonary resuscitation skills, these well trained surf club volunteers brought Mr Malone back to life four times. Now known as local heroes, who were not on patrol that morning but who were in the right place at the right time, they used their knowledge and skills, which certainly saved Paul's life. Club lifesaving director Peter Ives has nominated the group for Surf Life Saving NSW's Rescue of the Month. It is well deserved.

KEP ENDERBY MEMORIAL LECTURE

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [5.05 p.m.]: I recognise the inaugural Kep Enderby Memorial Lecture that was held on 22 October. It is proposed that it will be an annual public lecture organised by the Australian Human Rights Commission to honour the memory of the Hon. Kep Enderby, QC. As Commonwealth Attorney-General, Kep Enderby introduced the Racial Discrimination Act in the House of Representatives in February 1975. The Act came into force on 31 October 1975, which makes this month the fortieth anniversary of the Act. Indeed, today is the fortieth anniversary, almost to the day. It was Australia's first Federal human rights and anti-discrimination legislation.

The lecture was hosted by the Race Discrimination Commissioner for the Australian Human Rights Commission, Dr Tim Soutphommasane. The lecture will be delivered annually by a leading figure to advance public understanding and debate about racism, race relations and the Racial Discrimination Act. The inaugural lecture was delivered by the Hon. Robert French, AC, Chief Justice of the High Court. Also present were Professor Gillian Triggs, President of the Australian Human Rights Commission; Kep's wife, Dorothy, and his son, Keir; as well as the Hon. Susan Ryan, AO, Australia's first Age Discrimination Commissioner, who is also Disability Discrimination Commissioner and a colleague of Kep's.

TRIBUTE TO ALBY SCHULTZ

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [5.06 p.m.]: I wish to farewell one of Australia's most hardworking public servants, former member of Parliament, Mr Alby Schultz, who was not only one of our nation's most successful parliamentarians, but was also one of the most genuine and selfless men to walk into this Chamber. I previously worked for Alby in his office at Goulburn. In 33 years of public service, Alby gained a reputation for being courageous and forthright in all aspects of his life. From his position on Cootamundra Shire Council beginning in 1983, through to his election as State Member for Burrinjuck in 1988, and achieving a record tenure of 15 years as the Federal member for Hume before his retirement in 2013, Alby always represented his constituents with ferocious loyalty, choosing never to compromise on his personal values or his community's expectations. He and his phenomenal wife, Gloria, were a force to be reckoned with and I was truly privileged to know them. My heart goes out to Glo as well as their sons, Grant and Dean, and their families. Alby's supreme kindness and unwavering fortitude remained with him throughout his ongoing battle with cancer, and it is with great sadness that we have seen him go. He will certainly be sorely missed.

PRIDE OF WORKMANSHIP AWARDS

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) [5.06 p.m.]: The Pride of Workmanship Awards evening was held by the vibrant Rotary Club of Springwood on Monday 26 October. This presentation is a Rotary initiative that encourages and acknowledges people in our local workforce for their principled standards. Individual recipients are recognised for pride in their work, customer service and work ethic. I commend those who nominated individuals and the following people who won an award: Shannon Atkins, Andrew Elliott, Ren Podmore and Neal Newell. It was great to witness new and energetic Friends of Rotary Bec Herbison and Nyree Waterson also receive their badges and participate in the evening. Thank you to vocational service director Lynda Sparkes and President Pat Ainslie for their particular efforts in welcoming me to an enjoyable and successful night.

ALBURY PRESCHOOL

MERCY CARE HOSPITAL, ALBURY

Mr GREG APLIN (Albury) [5.07 p.m.]: Congratulations to Albury Preschool, which celebrated its seventieth birthday this week. The preschool will hold activities and displays throughout the week. As the school director, Gabe Connell, said, "Not too many preschools were around in 1945." Congratulations

also to the Mercy Care Hospital, Albury, which also celebrated 70 years on Monday 26 October. A garden space was dedicated to Alma Hartley, who was a palliative care volunteer and part of Mercy's Bereavement Support Walking Group. I had the honour of unveiling a plaque in her memory. The garden is a place where patients and their families can enjoy peace and quiet together.

PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE SPRING FAIRS

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) [5.08 p.m.]: Parent associations in our schools make an enormous contribution in many ways. Recently, I have been witnessing firsthand the contributions of parents and citizens [P&C] associations, which have been taking advantage of the warmer weather to hold spring fairs. I have had a lot of fun visiting spring fairs at Anna Bay Public School, St Brigid's Parish School at Raymond Terrace and Wirreanda Public School. Having previously been President of Wirreanda's P&C and organised a spring fair, I know how much hard work goes into making these events a success.

Gauging by the huge crowds and enormous smiles on the faces, what a success they were! Whilst I am sure all the P&Cs achieved their fundraising targets, which will help fund much-needed improvements within our schools, it is the memories they helped shape and the communities they brought together that make these events so special. I congratulate the hard working P&C members at Wirreanda Public School, Anna Bay Public School and the Parents and Friends Association at St Brigid's Parish School at Raymond Terrace for their enormous contribution to building stronger communities.

NORTH PARKES MINES EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

Mr ANDREW GEE (Orange—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.09 p.m.]: On Sunday 18 October Northparkes Mines Emergency Response Team won the 2015 Victorian Mines Rescue Competition for the second year in a row. The Victorian competition is a well-respected and highly competitive national event. It was held at Energy Australia's Yallourn Mine in the La Trobe Valley, Victoria. Eleven teams from across New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland competed against each other in five areas—first aid, fire skills, breathing apparatus, practical and theory. Northparkes was placed first in theory, second in breathing apparatus and third in the remaining areas.

The team consisted of: captain, Matt Greenaway; vice-captain, Matt Flynn; medic, Jeneta Wellard; second medic, Travis Beaton; and gas men, Brad Seaman and Mat Allen. Another highlight was Mat Allen winning the Grunt Award for teamwork and attitude during the competition. I also congratulate the managing director, Stefanie Loader, and community and external relations officials, Justine Fisher and Elysha Loiterton. The team at the Northparkes Mines provides valuable support to the local community. The team is well respected and well supported. I congratulate Northparkes on their continued success.

CENTRAL COAST INTERNATIONAL RUGBY SEVENS TOURNAMENT

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang) [5.10 p.m.]: The Central Coast International Rugby Sevens Tournament was held over the weekend of 24 and 25 October at the Morrie Breen Oval, Kanwal. The University of Newcastle's Central Coast Sevens men's tournament is an exclusive 16-team format featuring some of the strongest sevens competition outside the world series. Teams from Australia, Germany, New Zealand, Fiji, Canada, the United States of America and Hong Kong took part. The tournament also featured Australia's premier women's sevens tournament, which is regarded as one of the most dynamic women's sevens events in the world. The quality of the Kinesio Cup women's event has been referred to as world class, with the event held in high esteem for its ongoing commitment to leading the way to achieving equality in sport, particularly within the sevens arena.

Teams from Australia, Japan, Fiji, Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America participated. It was a good weekend for Australian rugby, with the Thunderbolts and the Pearls taking out

the men's and women's titles. The Thunderbolts went through the competition undefeated, and eventually saw off Fiji's Tabadama 31-21 in the final. In the women's competition the Pearls conceded just three tries in the entire competition, and two of those came in the final against the New Zealand Development. Congratulations go particularly to the organiser, Craig Morgan.

NOSTRA AETATE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.11 p.m.]: Last night I attended an occasion to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Nostra Aetate at the Great Synagogue in Sydney. It was hosted by the Australian Catholic University, the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies and the Sydney Jewish Museum. Nostra Aetate translates as "in our time". It is a Catholic theological statement that was proclaimed by Pope Paul VI in 1965—20 years after World War II in what was the shadow of the Holocaust. It has provided a key platform for strong Christian-Jewish relations over the past 50 years. Last night speeches were made by Archbishop Anthony Fisher and Rabbi Dr Benjamin Elton. The event was attended by the Australian Muslim leader, the Grand Mufti. It is an encouraging and positive sign of future interfaith interaction.

Nostra Aetate called in particular for three things that continue to be relevant today: mutual understanding and respect accompanied by the elimination of prejudice; a unifying acknowledgement that the source of truth, duty and goodness in our world is a higher power; and a willingness to collaborate and cooperate for the common good. If ideals like justice and compassion are followed in a practical way we can indeed hope for peace in our time, despite current challenges. I also acknowledge the admirable contribution and efforts of local religious leaders such as Zalman Kastel and Sister Giovanni Farquer, who dedicate substantial efforts to positive interfaith relations.

PALLIATIVE CARE MAITLAND

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) [5.12 p.m.]: Judith Robinson and the volunteers of Palliative Care Maitland run a not-for-profit, non-clinical palliative care support service that provides free respite for palliative patients, carers and their families. The volunteers provide the most vital, special and personal care that we could all wish for in that tragic, sad and difficult period leading up to the end of life. That might be something as simple as driving a patient to a chemotherapy session, or as difficult as sharing a last conversation with someone. In a terrible year for the group, in which they lost their offices and have been flooded, they have struggled on and even expanded their services to work with the Cancer Council to provide transport to all cancer patients, whether terminal or not. They provide a vital service and I know that our community deeply values their contribution. I will continue to advocate on their behalf for sustainable funding of this service, which is essential to our communities.

MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.13 p.m.]: I congratulate Matthew Pridham of North Nowra and Daniel Pridham of Kiama as well as all who participated in an outstanding fundraising effort to raise significant funds to find a cure for motor neurone disease. On Sunday 4 October Daniel was in his full firefighting gear in 34-degree heat when he climbed 98 storeys to the top of Sydney Tower to raise important funds. Overall, \$170,000 was raised, with Daniel alone receiving well over \$2,200 from online donations. The NSW Rural Fire Service has even bigger and better plans for 2016. I congratulate both Daniel and Matthew on their outstanding efforts to support a really great cause.

Community recognition statements concluded.

POLICE INTEGRITY COMMISSION

Report

The Deputy-Speaker tabled, pursuant to section 103 of the Police Integrity Commission Act 1996, the report of the Police Integrity Commission for the year ended 30 June 2015.

Ordered to be printed.

CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN

Report

The Deputy-Speaker tabled, pursuant to section 190 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, the report of the Children's Guardian for the year ended 30 June 2015.

Ordered to be printed.

NSW CHILD DEATH REVIEW TEAM

Report

The Deputy-Speaker tabled, pursuant to section 34I of the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993, the following reports:

Report of the NSW Child Death Review Team for 2014, dated October 2015

Report of the NSW Child Death Review Team entitled "A scan of childhood injury and disease prevention infrastructure in NSW", dated October 2015

Ordered to be printed.

INSPECTOR OF THE NEW SOUTH WALES CRIME COMMISSION

Report

The Deputy-Speaker tabled, pursuant to section 68 of the Crime Commission Act 2012, the report of the Inspector of the New South Wales Crime Commission for the year ended 30 June 2015.

Ordered to be printed.

Pursuant to sessional order private members' statements proceeded with.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SYDENHAM TO BANKSTOWN URBAN RENEWAL CORRIDOR PLAN

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) [5.15 p.m.]: I draw to the attention of the House the draft plans for significant and far-reaching land use changes along the Sydenham to Bankstown train line. The Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor Plan allows for nine-storey buildings up to 400 metres from existing train stations, including the Marrickville and Dulwich Hill stations in my electorate. That will mean an extra 36,000 apartments and approximately 100,000 extra people living along the corridor—a level of density that has local residents asking many questions. We need a solution to housing affordability, and density around public transport is a part of that solution; but so is limiting urban sprawl to our west, north and south. If residents are to accept density, they deserve to know it is density done well. Unfortunately, the Government got that back to front.

The Government's plan allows for one-size-fits-all type of development, which is entirely at odds with the character of our beautiful and historical inner west suburbs. There is little consideration of allotment sizes, building types or car parking and servicing within the established street network. There are no details on essential community infrastructure, such as hospitals, childcare centres and schools. There are no details on commercial and industrial zoning, and no detail on quality job creation. There are no plans for additional open space or sporting fields, which are already at a premium. And most troubling of all is that the rezoning will take place a full 10 years before the Sydney Metro line is open, with Transport for NSW confirming that the existing train line will be closed while the metro is built.

Under the Government's plans, that means there will be an extra 100,000 residents looking for seats on already crowded buses and trains. As I said, it is all back to front. Under the Government's approach, the developer will be king, not the community. The developers' approach undoubtedly will spark land speculation, with no plans for value capture or levies on developers to fund community infrastructure, open spaces or affordable housing. Local councils will be left to assess a series of individual and developer-driven proposals in isolation, which is not the way to enhance or grow a suburb. The cumulative impacts of each of those hotchpotch developments on parking, parks and other community infrastructure will not be assessed; nor will councils have the power to refuse them on those grounds.

Residents are rightly concerned about what those plans will mean, and they are rightly suspicious of a government that refuses to consult with them meaningfully. The Government has scheduled very few information sessions, with less than one week's notice for the first session in Marrickville. Initially the Government gave residents only six weeks to digest and respond to the plans. While I welcome the announcement of an additional two weeks, the period allowed for examination of the plans still falls well short of the time needed to adequately evaluate this plan, with its scale and complexity. But that should not be a surprise: It is a case of history repeating. The Government has been forced back to the drawing board over and over again—including in relation to the Parramatta Road revitalisation—because the Government bungled the community consultation the first time. The Government has given residents only 55 days to respond to the environmental impact statement for stage 1 of Westconnex—all eight volumes and thousands of pages of it.

Once again, the community has been left with many questions and little opportunity to ask them. There is a better way. We need density that is smart, sustainable and sympathetic to the character of our neighbourhoods. We can do that by demanding that developers ensure quality construction and by levying developers to pay for community infrastructure, open space and affordable housing. We can do it by promoting gold-standard architecture and planning that works with the existing pattern of streets and subdivisions. And we can do it by demanding quality jobs and services and infrastructure that promote active living. What we need is an approach that accepts the need for growth but that recognises the things that make our suburbs great. A one-size-fits-all plan for excessive high-rise development is not the right approach. We can and must do better.

HAWKESBURY ELECTORATE EVENTS

Mr DOMINIC PERROTTET (Hawkesbury—Minister for Finance, Services and Property) [5.19 p.m.]: The Hawkesbury is renowned for its many natural wonders—its beautiful national parks and expansive waterways—but the region is also steeped in history, as one of the oldest European settlements in Australia. Dotted among the region's grassy paddocks and green trees are some of Australia's oldest buildings, and among those buildings is the oldest standing Catholic church on the Australian mainland—St Matthew's Catholic Church in Windsor.

This year, St Matthew's celebrates its 175th anniversary—a remarkable milestone for the parish which has been serving the local community continuously since it was officially opened in 1840. Last Sunday I was honoured to attend a mass at the church in commemoration of this significant anniversary. I

extend my congratulations and gratitude to Father Cook and the community he leads at St Matthew's for their warm hospitality. The parish was born of humble beginnings. In 1831 Father Therry arrived in Sydney, ministering to the local Catholic population in Sydney, Liverpool, Parramatta and Windsor. The original location for these Windsor services was the Windsor Convict Barracks but in 1833 land was donated for the construction of a local Catholic church, as well as a school and cemetery.

Unfortunately the local Catholic population was not exactly flush with cash, since most of them were impoverished farmers and ex-convicts. However, little by little, the money was raised including, in 1836, a generous bequest of £350 from parishioner James Doyle. That same year Archbishop Bede Polding blessed the foundation stone for the church. The parishioners would have to wait another four years before construction was complete and it was not until 21 October 1840 that the local Catholic community first gathered for the official opening of St Matthew's Catholic Church—the church that still stands and serves to this day. Father Cook is the twenty-eighth priest to serve the parish of St Matthew's. In his homily at the commemorative mass, Father Cook spoke of the parish and its unique place in Australia's history and said:

This Church of St Matthew proudly stands here today in its restored and refurbished beauty as a great testament to Catholic faith and practice on mainland Australia, and which continues to provide a place for this current generation of Windsorites.

It is a tangible reminder of the early struggles of the Catholic community in the fledgling colony of New South Wales to establish a meaningful and respected presence in the life of what would emerge to be this great land of Australia.

The parish community of St Matthew's has been busy commemorating its 175th birthday with an art competition, a parish dinner dance, an organ service, the commemorative mass, and with many parish picnics and more to come. It is a joyful time for the community and a wonderful reminder of the rich history that permeates the Hawkesbury region. Once again I congratulate the community of St Matthew's on this momentous anniversary. I thank Father Cook and the parishioners for their wonderful hospitality and for their service to the Hawkesbury community and wish them many more fruitful years to come.

BIG BANANA FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr ANDREW FRASER (Coffs Harbour—The Assistant-Speaker) [5.22 p.m.]: Tonight I congratulate the management and owners of that great Coffs Harbour and Australian icon—the Big Banana, which is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary this year. Last Friday night I had the pleasing duty of opening the new Big Banana water park.

Mr John Robertson: Did you try it out?

Mr ANDREW FRASER: No, not yet.

The DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr Thomas George): You are supposed to do that when you open it.

Mr ANDREW FRASER: I know but it was a chilly night and whilst I had originally said that I wanted to open it by going down the slide, the unfortunate part was that the ribbon was to be cut down the bottom and the slide was some 100 metres high. I did not intend to take a coat but my wife thought it would be chilly and as soon as sunset hit it became an unusually chilly night for Coffs Harbour. I was amazed by the number of young people there on the night having fun. It must have been freezing with the breeze blowing in from the south-east.

The opening was an event of which I was proud to be part. The funding of the water park was assisted by a Regional Visitor Economy Fund grant of half a million dollars. The management and owners of the Big Banana put in the balance of the funds, the total cost being around \$2 million. It has given us

something to rival any tourist destination on the North Coast and makes Coffs Harbour even more of a tourist destination than it has been in the past. I was talking to a friend who was reminiscing about having photographs taken at the Big Banana when he was about five years old. He had recently returned and was amazed to see that, with all the tropical weather, the Big Banana had shrunk so much over those years. I think just about every family that has travelled through Coffs Harbour over the past 50 years has stopped in front of the Big Banana and had a family photograph taken.

These days the Big Banana is managed in partnership with Kevin Ruby—who bought it 20-odd years ago—and the Village Building Company. I congratulate Bob Winnel and Kevin Ruby, who both fought long and hard to make sure the Big Banana remained a viable tourist attraction that will assist Coffs Harbour as a tourist destination. This is just part one of a major plan to improve the facilities there. Once the highway bypasses Coffs Harbour, access to the site will be improved. I also congratulate Michael Lockman, and I especially congratulate him and his wife on the birth of their daughter a week before the water park opened. Even though he had fatherly duties at home with his wife and baby, Isabelle, he was there for the opening and the night went off like clockwork.

Coffs Harbour is no longer regarded as the largest banana-producing area in New South Wales or, for that matter, in Australia. However, the Big Banana reminds people of the money and the work that the banana industry brought to Coffs Harbour over the years. The Big Banana started as a highway banana stall. Thousands of people now visit it on a daily basis, year in and year out. Usually mum or dad take a photograph of the children in front of the Big Banana and miss out on being in the photograph themselves but I might suggest to students with a brain that they should charge a couple of dollars to take family photographs for visitors. I think they could make a million. Thanks to the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events, and Minister for Sport for providing funding through the Regional Visitor Economy Fund. It will assist Coffs Harbour to become a more attractive destination and it will give tourists and locals a great attraction to visit. In response to the earlier interjection of the member for Blacktown, I will be there in my board shorts over the Christmas break, if not before.

Mr John Robertson: I want to see a photo.

Mr ANDREW FRASER: I will bring a photo—it will not be pretty but it will be funny.

BLACKTOWN ELECTORATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Mr JOHN ROBERTSON (Blacktown) [5.27 p.m.]: I speak today on behalf of those in my local community who think the proposed sale of land owned by the Department of Education and Communities at Denis Winston Drive is not smart planning and does not meet community expectations. The 3.1 hectare block of land was earmarked to be the site of a school but in a massive backflip the space was rezoned, to be sold off to developers. Blacktown is a rapidly growing area, with housing development keeping up with the growing demand of people wanting to live in our wonderful local community. Who would not want to live in Blacktown? A 40-minute train ride from the city, access to the M4, M2, M7 and the Great Western Highway and a rich cultural diversity like no other, Blacktown is a great place to live.

It is no surprise to me that developers want to build more houses in our beautiful city but we must have smart development, planned development, development that brings the community with it and not just development for development's sake. The land towards the top of Denis Winston Drive in Doonside is a beautiful piece of bushland in this suburb and is valued by many locals. This area has hundreds of healthy trees which are the remnants of the Cumberland Plains woodlands. It is home to many birds and other flora which make it a vital part of our environmental infrastructure. On Tuesday this piece of land was put up for auction but failed to sell. This would be in part due to the hard work of community activists like Martin Ashton and the Blacktown City Council who have been putting pressure on the Minister for Planning, Rob Stokes, to reconsider the rezoning.

In fact, this failed sale could give the Minister a chance to respond to my correspondence

regarding the issue or the written question I lodged. Just in case the Minister has not had a chance to read my letter yet, let me summarise it: It would appear the long-term planning for education facilities is being compromised for a quick buck from the sale of this land to developers—does the Minister not think that is a bad idea? I asked him to respond and postpone the sale of land until sufficient advice is given. It is also worth noting that, when the member for Pittwater was environment Minister, he acknowledged the environmental value of the site, but as planning Minister he has now ticked off on the rezoning. The Blacktown mayor and Doonside residents have gone to great lengths to put this issue on the Government's radar, including doorstopping the Premier and Minister Stokes, but still there has been no response. The community campaign has been putting the pressure on, with Blacktown City Mayor, Steven Bali, doing a great job on this issue.

It needs to be noted that the Blacktown area is doing its fair share when it comes to development and providing more housing supply, with forecasters predicting an increase in dwellings of 2,041 per annum into the future and the Blacktown local government area consistently having one of the highest number of dwelling approvals in the State. We have to be for smart development, planned development and developments that bring the community with them. We also need to ensure that with increasing population density we maintain both environmental land and opportunities for more educational facilities.

At the moment this piece of land is an environmental location and in the longer term it was zoned for a school. The area has an ever-increasing population and there is more and more development making it critical that this piece of land stays in government ownership and is not sold to developers. There is ample opportunity in the Blacktown local government area for housing development and that development is going gangbusters. But with an increasing population we need to make sure that we do not have the same problems as are now being experienced in the inner city, where there is insufficient open space and, more importantly, insufficient space to provide educational facilities for families in those areas.

Mr ROB STOKES (Pittwater—Minister for Planning) [5.32 p.m.]: I commend the member for Blacktown for his strong advocacy on behalf of his community. I would like to correct a couple of points the member made. The first is that I have not ticked off on any rezoning of the site in my role as Minister for Planning. I understand that recently the Blacktown City Council submitted a planning proposal, which will obviously be considered in line with government policy. I want to make clear that in my role as environment Minister I made a statement about the importance of the Cumberland Plain Woodland that is on the site. I have visited the site and spoken to the mayor and locals in relation to the site. Whatever the ownership of the site, it has clear environmental values and those values must be respected, which will have an impact on the development potential of the site. It would be my clear expectation, as well as that of the council, that those environmental values will be respected.

MACARTHUR BMX CLUB

Mr CHRIS PATTERSON (Camden) [5.33 p.m.]: The Macarthur BMX Club was formed in early 1998 by a group of enthusiastic parents who were keen to bring the sport of BMX racing to the Macarthur region. With no facility, no track and no funds the initial idea was starting to look like a pipedream, but with a lot of tenacity and resolve the parents began to seek out support for their idea. Camden Council came on board and a location at Kirkham Park was found, and so began the formation of the track with the assistance of local businesses. After 3½ years of very hard work the track was opened in 2001. The club has grown to the point where its current location is almost too small, but it still managed to be awarded the opportunity to hold the 2014 New South Wales State Championships in Camden. The event was successful attracting hundreds of competitors and their families to Camden.

BMX began in the early 1970s when children began racing their bicycles on dirt tracks in southern California, inspired by the motocross stars of the time. By the mid-seventies BMX was well and truly considered a sport. In April 1981, the International BMX Federation was founded with the first world championships being held in 1982. In 2008, BMX became a full medal Olympic sport. On many occasions

BMX riders go on to other cycling sports. BMX Australia is recognised by the Australian Sports Commission as the National sporting organisation for BMX racing and freestyle BMX within Australia. BMX Australia is also an affiliate of Union Cyclist Internationale, the international cycling federation, and Australia is the second-largest BMX nation behind the United States.

Recently, over 110 Macarthur BMX Club members participated in the 2015 New South Wales State Titles. With only 660 competitors in the competition, Macarthur BMX Club's representation is exceptional. Competitors' ages range from five to 65 with boys, girls, men and women competing, which is an indication of the diversity of BMX riders. The results for the club were outstanding. The eight-year-old boys event was won by Ashton Pace and Bailey Seckold came eighth. Gracie Kate-Davis came seventh in eight-year-old girls and seventh in the 8-10 cruiser events. Mackenzie Hadley came second in the nine-year-old girls race.

Hayden Goulder came second in the 10-year-old boys event, with Bryce Fretwell third. Emily Edwards came sixth in the 10-year-old girls race. Taya Pace came first in the 11-year-old girls event, with April McGuinness third. Jye Furner came second in the 12-year-old boys race and fourth in the 11 to 12-year-old boys cruiser. He also made the New South Wales Dynamites team for the third consecutive year. Zac Davis came eighth in the 11- to 12-year-old boys cruiser. Latanna Markovski came fifth in the 13-year-old girls, Blake Pace came eighth in the 14-year-old boys event and Bailey Gerhard came seventh in the 15 to 16-year-old boys cruiser. Jessica McCormack came second in the 16-year-old girls and sixth in the 14+ pro women's event.

Louise Winton came fourth in the 15 to 16-year-old girls cruiser, with Cara Wilde fifth. Ashlee Osborne came sixth in the 16-year-old girls event. Joshua Wilde came eighth in the 17 to 24-year-old men cruiser with Daniel Leahy seventh in the 17 to 24-year-old men and third in the 17 to 24-year-old men cruiser. Kiel Dellow came fourth in the 25 to 29-year-old men and Keeley Shearing came fifth in the 30 to 34-year old women events. James Green came fifth in the 35 to 39-year-old men cruiser with Duncan Nicholson eighth. Justin Welch came seventh in the 40 to 44-year-old men and fifth in the 40 to 44-year old men's cruiser events. Brett Masterfield came seventh in the 45 to 49-year old men's cruiser with Matthew Leahy seventh in the 45 to 49-year-old men. Paul Wilde came fifth in the 45 to 49-year old men and fifth in the 45 to 49-year-old men's cruiser event.

In those very early days back in 1998, when some very ambitious parents had an idea, I am sure they could not have envisaged how the club would grow to be one of the most respected and highly regarded BMX clubs in New South Wales. The parents and the committee members—led by Fred Furner, an outstanding president—still groom the track to make it bigger and better for club members. I congratulate all competitors and the club for their success and wish them every success in the future.

YOUTH FRONTIERS MENTORING PROGRAM

Mr MICHAEL JOHNSEN (Upper Hunter) [5.38 p.m.]: I take this opportunity to inform the House of the success of the Youth Frontiers mentoring program that was recently held in my electorate of Upper Hunter. It is a great pleasure to be associated with Youth Frontiers, a New South Wales Government program that focuses on leadership and civic engagement. It targets student from years 8 and 9, who have the capacity to benefit from having a mentor. Singleton High School from the Upper Hunter electorate nominated 10 students to participate in this worthwhile program.

I congratulate Julie Stevens and her team from Max Potential for delivering the Youth Frontiers program. I also congratulate Singleton High School for its support. Students participating in Youth Frontiers received a minimum of 30 hours of mentoring, including at least 15 hours of one-to-one mentoring. This program gave the students an opportunity to build life skills and self-confidence by working collaboratively with their mentors, who I might add volunteered their time to undertake a community project that makes a difference in the local community. On Wednesday 14 October 2015 the 10 students from Singleton High School who undertook this beneficial program presented a wonderful

and informative showcase for the community, which was highly commended by those who attended.

I congratulate the following students from Singleton High School and their mentors who participated in this program: first, student Chelsea Croucher, and mentor Rachel Murray. Chelsea's project category was Community Harmony "Be Apart Wear Red for Heart" to raise awareness for heart disease by wearing red accessories to school for a day. Next was student Jorja Davies-Newburn and mentor Kylee Mavin. Jorja's project category was Community Harmony "Muscular Dystrophy Awareness Campaign" to raise awareness for muscular dystrophy so people can understand what it is and how it affects families. Then came student Kanyan Evans, and mentor Warren Deaves. Kanyan's project category was Community Harmony "2015 Official Cosplay Festival". It was a costume play event that helps characters to be recognised in the community—an event that will bring the community together.

I also congratulate student Baylee Garred and mentor Dianne McCluand. Baylee's project category was Youth Mental Health "Bouncy Ball—Resilience". Students had to write a letter about their future hopes, dreams and goals. This teaches teenagers resilience in their lives for a better outcome of mental health. I congratulate student Courtney Guy and mentor Jono Van Wyk. Courtney's project category was Community Harmony "Brave Not Bully" selecting a school, telling it about bullying and giving it resources to use if students are being bullied or if they see someone getting bullied. Next came student Tayla Ling and mentor Annette Bedford. Tayla's project category was Community Harmony "Helping Hunter's Homeless" to gather awareness and resources for the Singleton Homeless Centre to help both the homeless and the centre that supports them.

I also congratulate student Zach MacDonell and mentor Michael Crane. Zach's project category was Youth Mental Health "Youth Depression Awareness in the Upper Hunter". His aim was to raise awareness of youth with mental health issues in the community. Then came student Grace Nichols and mentor Pam Welham. Grace's project category was Community Harmony "Grace's Gathered Goods". Grace created hospital care bags to give to carers and patients who did not come prepared to stay overnight in hospital. Student Georgia Teasdale and mentor Christina Lindop are next. Georgia's project category was "Giving Joy to the Young at Heart".

She put boxes around Singleton for people to give their old bears and dolls to be donated to the nursing home for the elderly to cherish. I refer, finally, to student Rachael-Lee Woods and mentor Ella Janssen. Rachael-Lee's project category was Community Harmony "Toys Need Loving Too" and she collected donations of toys for the local childcare centre. These are not just names on a page for me, as I had the pleasure of meeting the students for about 1½ hours at Singleton High School when they opened up their hearts. It was a wonderful moment—one of the proudest moments I have had since becoming their local member. I applaud the professionalism of Singleton High School and look forward to the continued success of the Youth Frontiers Mentoring Program.

SOUTH WESTERN SYDNEY INSTITUTE OF TAFE

Mr PAUL LYNCH (Liverpool) [5.43 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to the proposed changes at the South Western Sydney Institute of TAFE. The Miller and Liverpool campuses or colleges of the South Western Sydney Institute are located within my electorate. Inevitably I know both those sites quite well. The issues I raise are particularly problematic for Miller TAFE. Members of the staff have given me a copy of the written proposals that are being discussed. The proposals include quite dramatic staff cuts. The proposals are dressed up in all the disingenuous rhetoric to which one regrettably has become accustomed. The proposals are provocatively and inaccurately described as "reform".

The jobs cuts are proposed across a number of disciplines. They include: plumbing, carpentry, glass and glazing, and painting and decorating, all of which come within the Building and Construction Faculty of the South Western Sydney Institute. They follow previous job cuts that I have detailed, including the decapitation of Miller College by the removal of Stuart Muir as manager. The jobs cuts that are set out in the documents that I have seen flow directly from the bizarrely entitled model and policy,

Smart and Skilled. In the plumbing program there will now be only three head teacher positions, with one position going. Five teaching positions will go, leaving only 11—a reduction of more than 30 per cent. In all, that is a net loss of six full-time positions. Of course, it is all dressed up in the usual nonsense of cost centres and cluster management teams—a cluster indeed.

There will be only four head carpentry positions, with two being cut—a reduction of 33 per cent. There will be 23 teaching positions in carpentry, six fewer than before—a reduction of more than 20 per cent. In glass and glazing, six positions will become three—a reduction of 50 per cent in full-time equivalent positions. Within painting and decorating seven positions will become four—a reduction of more than 40 per cent. Self-evidently, having reference to the percentages I have quoted, these are extraordinarily substantive cuts. At a time of booming construction in the south-west this seems not just counter-instinctive but, frankly, plain stupid. One cannot look sideways in Liverpool without seeing yet another developer getting a favourable hand from council and new buildings going up.

There is an increase in demand for trades. We are constantly being told by the Government that the economy is booming. Certainly all the signs are that there is growth there now and that growth will continue. There is a construction boom with a skills shortage. Indeed, even the documents distributed by management concede that there is growth in those sectors. In that case it is insane and childish to reduce the number of staff to train the people that we need to build these projects. These decisions and proposed changes represent the continued premeditated destruction of a world-class institution by a government philosophically opposed to TAFE.

The cuts to plumbing and carpentry are particularly serious, located as they are at Miller. It is not as if, almost uniquely in TAFE, numbers have fallen. In plumbing there were 397 enrolments in 2013 and there were 400 in 2015. The cuts that are being proposed are entirely unrelated to student numbers. Of course, there is a strategy relating to full-fee-paying positions. In fact, none of the people enrolled are full-fee-paying students. A two-week consultation period has been allowed until 4 November, which some staff regard as entirely inappropriate, taking into account the significant changes that are involved. I think the staff position makes perfect sense.

I have spoken before in this Chamber about these issues. Last year I referred to significant changes in the plumbing course. Earlier this year I spoke about changes in class support relating to general assistants and tool persons. There was a 30 per cent reduction in positions in these institutions. Administrative and library staff have also been slashed—we no longer have libraries; we have hubs—and they have got rid of half the managers in the institute. The managers that they seem to have got rid of are those who were least impressed by Smart and Skilled. These changes are stupid because they come at a time of booming construction and a shortage of skills, which is leading to the destruction of a world-class institution. These changes are incredibly damaging to my electorate and they are a blight on this House.

HOMELESSNESS

Mr CHRISTOPHER GULAPTIS (Clarence—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.47 p.m.]: I am extremely pleased that the Premier's 12-point priority plan includes addressing those social issues that confront our most vulnerable, such as domestic violence, protecting our kids and youth homelessness. The measure of a society is how we treat our most vulnerable. I am proud to be part of a Liberal-Nationals Government that is providing for all the people during this terrific rebuilding period in New South Wales. In particular, I want to deal with homelessness and to ensure that we can create sustainable social housing and increase housing supply. There is no doubt that the Liberal-Nationals Government has kick-started housing construction in New South Wales. We have record building approvals to meet the growing demand for housing and the Government is working in overdrive to meet the housing shortage in the State.

The building boom has not quite hit in the northern rivers region and, being a popular lifestyle region, we have a shortage of housing in the private sector, very low rental vacancies, a notable lack of

affordable housing and we sit below the State average in our social housing stock. It has put enormous pressure on housing, our most vulnerable community members and, in particular, the homeless. This region is one of the most disadvantaged in Australia. It contains a high number of households with incomes significantly below the Australian average, along with higher than average unemployment rates. To compound this, the Northern Rivers has one of the highest percentages in Australia of households faced with housing-related stress, with the situation progressively worsening over recent years. Rents in the region are the highest in New South Wales outside of Sydney and this all combines to create an increased rate of homelessness. I have been told that 15 per cent of New South Wales rough sleepers are located in the Northern Rivers region, which has 4 per cent of the State's total population.

Becoming homeless is not always due to a single risk factor but is more commonly the result of several compounding issues and concerns. It could be a combination of mental illness, substance abuse and a range of personal risk factors that occur at various stages of a person's life, such as disruptive childhood experiences, domestic violence and past and current health status. The homeless feel social exclusion, disempowerment and disconnection from community and society. They are shut out, fully or partially, from the social, economic, political and cultural systems which the mainstream community enjoys and takes for granted. They are stigmatised, disconnected, unsupported and isolated. There is no simple solution. It needs a whole-of-community approach that requires government working with non-government organisations and the broader community. There is a need for more affordable housing, early intervention strategies, integrated services, availability of information, effective community awareness campaigns, and improved government funding for housing and services.

Providing for these needs with a limited budget and competing priorities means that we have to be innovative, dedicated and dynamic. Smart delivery of services to the homeless will ensure we get the best outcome. It is no good just providing housing and thinking that the job is done. The homeless need ongoing support. They need to be case managed for a period of time to help them fit back into mainstream society. When individuals and families are able to access safe and secure housing with security of tenure they can begin to re-establish social networks and social capital resources, which are essential to health and wellbeing. That must include access to supportive community services. Early intervention strategies are critical to preventing homelessness. When people get to the stage of being homeless they tend to have a variety of problems. If safe and secure accommodation can be found for people early in the cycle they then have a chance to get well and settle into a neighbourhood where they feel at home.

Only a few weeks ago the North Coast Nationals members of Parliament had the benefit of a presentation on a new model to deal with homelessness. The chief executive officer of On Track Community Programs [OTCP], Elaine De Vos, spoke to us about an innovative program called Homelessness Outreach Mobile Engagement Service [HOMES]. The OCTP is a community-based organisation that delivers youth and family programs across northern New South Wales and south-east Queensland. The benefit of the HOMES model is that it is an innovative model of service delivery that will actively seek out people who are chronically homeless and deliver support and services to where they are.

HOMES will use a bus and operate seven days a week between 6.00 a.m. and 8.00 p.m. Services will be delivered by a HOMES support team consisting of an experienced case manager, nurse practitioner, psychologist, Indigenous case manager and social worker. They will establish trust with the homeless and deliver services on the street or places the homeless frequent. This multiagency program works with the homeless throughout their journey back into the mainstream community. I would advocate for such a model to be trialled in my electorate of Clarence and, in fact, across the Northern Rivers. I commend OTCP on its innovative approach in dealing with a vexed problem.

SEVEN HILLS ELECTORATE 2015 YEAR 12 GRADUATES

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Seven Hills) [5.52 p.m.]: I congratulate and thank our year 12 classes of

2015, their parents and, most importantly, the teachers for the monumental contribution they have all made to the lives of others in the Seven Hills electorate. To the students of Seven Hills electorate I say: You have acted as leaders and mentors to those younger than you both inside and outside of the school gate. You have no doubt touched the lives of many and for some of the things you have done you may not have received thanks. You should all be proud of the decision you made to finish your secondary schooling. Your education gives you the skills and knowledge to embark on life's journey and enjoy the endless possibilities and opportunities that it will bring.

Your education in a New South Wales public school positions you well to compete and succeed in the ever-increasingly borderless world in which we live. As is often said, it is possible that some of the jobs you will one day take on do not yet exist. Your generation, compared to the generation that sits in this Chamber today, is much better equipped to prosper and work in places of disruption as a result of the ever-changing technology. Many of you may still have your heads buried in books. This afternoon some of you may have been studying or sitting exams in religion, electro technology or Italian studies. When you finish, enjoy your well-earned break, have a fun and safe schoolies week, but most importantly get excited about your future.

Whether you are continuing your studies at university or TAFE or starting an apprenticeship in the workplace, there has never been a better time to be a young person in New South Wales. More than anywhere else in Australia, the jobs of today and tomorrow are right here in New South Wales on our doorstep. I say to the parents of the students of the electorate that, whilst you have raised and nurtured your child at home, you have entrusted the New South Wales Government with the great responsibility of looking after your children for nearly 200 days every year of their school life. There is little doubt that you made a good decision all those years ago to send your children to a New South Wales public school. We live in a State where we can confidently say that our children's generation will be more successful than our own.

I say to the teachers of the electorate that without you we would not have the next generation of entrepreneurs, small business owners, religious leaders, tradespersons, professionals, public servants or even elected representatives. It is as simple as that. Without teachers we would not have the growth that we do in New South Wales or in Seven Hills. We would not have the jobs of the future in Seven Hills or New South Wales and we would not have the prosperity that we now all enjoy without your selfless dedication to making a difference. You are the true local heroes. You are the ones who make the most tangible impact upon our lives. I look forward to attending the presentation evenings of the many schools in the Seven Hills electorate and celebrating the excellence and achievements occurring in our schools every day.

This time next year I hope to be congratulating the class of 2016. They have already embarked on that journey for their year 12 graduation. It is at this point that I would like to congratulate those elected as school captains for their final school year: at Northmead Creative and Performing Arts School, captains Annie-Louise Brown and Suren Missaghi and vice captains Molly Dallas and Trent Drinnan; at The Hills Sports High, captains Chloe Hynde and Nicholas Johns and vice captains Cassidy Bastiffe and Alexander Newton; and at Pendle Hill High School, captains Mary Tuquali and Mansoor Naqshbandi and vice captains Yohan Li and Tyrone Pynor. The 2016 year is well and truly shaping up to be a great year in the electorate. As the local member I look forward to continuing to work with the schools in driving for better outcomes for all our kids.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.57 p.m.]: I join the member for Seven Hills in passing on my congratulations to the 70,000 students who have recently completed their Higher School Certificate [HSC] exams. It has no doubt been a stressful time in their lives but it is also a very exciting time. Each student must remember that the HSC is not the only pathway to success. Every member of the House has spent time sitting exams but achieving our career goals was not necessarily determined by the HSC. There are many ways to achieve one's goals. I know that a good education is needed for whatever we do in our lives. One's education does not stop when we complete the HSC; it is a

lifelong endeavour. I encourage all HSC students to consider further studies, whether in vocational training or the university sector. Continual learning is very important and will stand them in good stead.

TOUKLEY RSL CLUB SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong) [5.58 p.m.]: I speak this evening about the sixtieth anniversary of Toukley RSL Club, now known as Club Toukley. I acknowledge that my notes are taken from a speech made by the current president of the Toukley RSL Sub-Branch, Mr Bob Wilson. I will start with a brief history of the club. The Upper Tuggerah Lakes Sub-Branch [UTL] was formed at Holmesville homestead, opposite the present club, by 10 returned servicemen from World War I and World War II. On 24 October 1949 the sub-branch purchased the old Wyong Bakehouse for £104 5s and, with voluntary labour, reconstructed the building with suitable additions. The building when it was finished was a double-frontage weatherboard construction situated on land where the main entrance to the club is now.

The official opening of the UTL Sub-Branch building occurred in July 1950. Later the first bowling green was built at the back of the building, fronting Athol Street, and still exists today. The inaugural meeting of the UTL Sub-Branch was held on 21 March 1955, consisting only of RSL personnel. That was in accordance with the Constitution of the Returned Services League of Australia (NSW Branch), which was a requirement of Parliament. Following the required establishment of the club, a management committee was formed on 15 August 1955. The members of the UTL Sub-Branch agreed to pay a weekly rental of £5 to the landlord of the UTL Sub-branch dating back to 1 April 1955.

The Upper Tuggerah Lakes Sub-Branch Club was then officially registered with the State Government Liquor Licensing Board on 26 October 1955. The first annual general meeting was held on 6 February 1956. The first poker machines were five in number and consisted of one "two bobber", two "deeners", or shilling machines, one "zack" or sixpence machine, and one penny machine, which went to Welfare. In those days the machines were hired and the club received only a percentage of the net takings. A new brick building was erected in 1963 and was named the Toukley RSL Sub-Branch Club. Major extensions and renovations were carried out in 1968 and 1973. In the late 1970s and early 1980s the club and sub-branch purchased all the land bound by the four streets surrounding it, with the exception of the police station area.

The club purchased the area where the old Catholic church was situated, on the corner of Holmes Avenue and Main Road, for \$70,000 in 1969. The club also purchased the memorial blocks in 1970, with the memorial being finished and dedicated in 1975. In 1972 the State Government passed legislation that all licensed clubs must be registered under State company law with the Registered Clubs Act. The club has since traded as a company limited under guarantee and become known as the Toukley RSL Sub-Branch Club Limited. Despite the title "club limited", it operates as an independent entity from the sub-branch.

Toukley RSL Sub-Branch operates out of the club limited premises and retains an interest and operational involvement with the club limited. Today, the sub-branch has a great working relationship with the club limited, and that has only been enhanced by the cooperation of the club's staff, management and board members. On behalf of the community, I congratulate chairman Ken Piper and his board, chief executive officer Trevor Haynes and current and former staff on 60 fantastic years of serving Toukley. I particularly thank them for their support of local sporting and community groups. I am pleased to say that the club continues to have a fantastic relationship with the RSL Sub-Branch and the National Servicemen's Association, of which I am a patron. I am pleased to hold a number of functions at the club. It has great food and great staff, who are very welcoming. Although it is already a great club, it is currently undergoing renovations. Once again, I pass on my congratulations to the club and all those involved with it, particularly the life members. I congratulate them on 60 years of great service to the Toukley community.

SIKH GRAMMAR SCHOOL AUSTRALIA

Mr KEVIN CONOLLY (Riverstone) [6.03 p.m.]: The Sikh community in my electorate has a grand vision to construct the Sikh Grammar School Australia at Rouse Hill. Like many ethnic and cultural groups who have come to Australia over the years, the Sikh community aspires to pass on its traditions, learning and culture to its next generation living in Australia. They want to emulate other communities such as the Catholics, Muslims, Jews and other groups who have set up their own school systems as part of their journey. Sikhs have lived in New South Wales and Australia for more than 100 years. Some people will be familiar with the community at Woolgoolga near Coffs Harbour on the mid North Coast, where Sikhs settled long ago. However, it was not until recent years that the community reached a critical mass to make this kind of aspiration possible.

In my electorate of Riverstone there is a gurdwara, or Sikh temple. It is a natural gathering point for the Sikh community in my region. Many people of Punjabi background have moved to the electorate to be near it. That has resulted in the Sikh community's commitment to purchase land in the region and build the first Sikh school in Australia. I pay tribute to key committee members Bhupinder Singh, Sham Singh and Kuldip Singh, who have led the charge. I also acknowledge the many other members of the Sikh community who have been involved in the process. The committee is leading a dedicated team as they work on the property they have purchased in Tallawong Road at Rouse Hill. They are renovating a cottage on the site to use as temporary office accommodation while the main school building is being constructed.

I also acknowledge the work of Dr Surinder Singh, who was a key leader in the development of the Guru Nanak Punjabi Language School based at the Sikh temple in Glenwood. At that school hundreds of Punjabi Australian children are learning the Punjabi language on weekends to complement their mainstream Australian schooling during the week. The school is passing on the culture of Punjab and the Sikh religion to the next generation of Punjabi Australians. In doing so it is making them feel most fortunate to have a foot in two cultures and to be able to see the world from two perspectives. I believe it adds to the life experiences of those young people and helps the wider community to see outside the box, rather than perhaps being limited from exposure to only one culture.

The Sikh Grammar School buildings are being designed and the task of recruiting staff has begun. In addition, a team of people from throughout the Punjabi community are raising funds to help pay for the project. The school is planned to open in 2017 with 30 students in an initial primary school intake. However, it has a much bigger vision to take students through to Higher School Certificate level in the fullness of time. The school will be open to the whole community, not just to people from a Punjabi Sikh background. The school is consciously being built on the principles of openness and inclusiveness. It also aspires to academic excellence, which the Punjabi community values very highly.

It is seen as a pathway to success and a critical ingredient in a positive transition to life in a new country. The planners of the school have academic performance as a high priority and they certainly will not be settling for second best. The school will aspire to be the very best it can be and it will offer that best education to the whole community. I congratulate the Punjabi Sikh community in my electorate and the wider region for taking on such a huge task. I wish them well in achieving their goals. I hope to have the pleasure of joining them soon when the school is operational.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.07 p.m.]: I join with the member for Riverstone in congratulating the Sikh community of Riverstone on establishing their new school. Every day in the member for Riverstone's community, my community and communities across New South Wales we see examples of the contribution made by Australians who have come from overseas. There is no better example of hardworking commitment to this country than that demonstrated by the Sikh community and other Indian Australian communities every day. It is appropriate that we acknowledge the contribution of Indian Australians because next month the festival of Diwali will be held, which celebrates the triumph of light over darkness. In celebrating this festival we also celebrate what is best about Australia: its diversity and the wonderful people who have made this country great. The Sikh community

has played an enormous role in building the modern Australia that we know and love today. I thank them for their contribution.

CHILD MIGRANTS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland) [6.08 p.m.]: On the day when the Premier and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have apologised in this place to the children of Fairbridge Farm for the terrible abuse that they suffered, I add my personal apology to those children, who are now adults. I will also provide some reflections that may make a difference to the way in which we deal with policies in this area in the future. In 1997, as a young idealistic public servant in the Department of Immigration, I was tasked with writing the Commonwealth Government's response to the then Western Australian Government's inquiry into the British migrant children's scheme that operated in that State. While preparing the response I researched the topic in great detail. It was appalling and horrifying reading.

I became very familiar with the work of Margaret Humphreys, the social worker in England who worked with many of the former British and Maltese child migrants to find the truth of their origins and to reconnect them with their families. There were many terrible stories that touched me extremely deeply. In fact, they touched me so deeply that when I later travelled to Western Australia I visited Bindoon and Clontarf because I needed to see the places where these atrocities took place to achieve some sort of closure. What struck me was the peacefulness and quiet, despite the fact that those beautiful and grand buildings had been home to such horror. I thought of the tiny little hands, not much bigger than those of my then five-year-old, that helped to build them.

During my investigations I went to the legal section of the department to gain a legal opinion on the Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act 1946, under which the Minister for Immigration delegated his guardianship of those children to the many church and community organisations that took them on in the name of caring for them. I wanted to know who was responsible for the oversight of these children and who was their guardian. I was prevented by senior departmental advisers from obtaining that legal opinion. They simply did not want me to ask the question; nor would they let me forward it to the Attorney-General's Department. There were fears of compensation claims and questions about government liability, which have all now come to pass. Sadly, that has come too late for many of the children. It was the time of the Stolen Generation report, and I saw the many correlations between the British and Maltese children and the stolen Aboriginal children, who received an apology from the Government, but again too late.

Given what we know about the need for clear monitoring and oversight of these most precious children, what will happen to the many people with disabilities in our State who will move from government homes to facilities run by churches, community services and for-profit providers as early as July next year? Who will be responsible for them? Who will be their guardians? I note that the Minister for Disability Services is hosting a briefing for members soon. The fundamental question of who will be the guardian is the most important that he will have to answer. I understand that the Government is trying to extract itself from the disability services sector by moving functions and responsibilities to the Federal Government and the private sector. I have serious, well-founded concerns, based on my experiences and those of many other people, that these issues will not be addressed properly or in time. Who will advocate for these people if they suffer abuse or neglect? Their parents will be dead, and perhaps also their siblings. It will be too late.

I was told recently that one of the group homes so wildly and loudly lauded by the Minister was taken out of the hands of a private not-for-profit provider during the final term of the Labor Government by one of my predecessors, the Hon. Frank Terenzini. It was taken from the provider because of evidence of questionable care practices. Who will be the provider of last resort when there are no government homes? Who will be left to the advocate? Most importantly, who will be the guardians? Who will take responsibility for these people? They are the most disadvantaged, the most vulnerable and the least able to advocate for themselves. We need answers, and so do they; and they deserve them. Let us not have

another tragedy.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.13 p.m.]: I acknowledge the member for Maitland's contribution and the service she has given this State in the important work she did caring for some of the most vulnerable in our community. The issues she has raised are real and genuine, and I undertake to convey them to the Minister immediately. I will join with the member in working to ensure that those at the margins in our community, those without a voice, those without a guardian or someone who cares for and loves them, are protected and do not fall through the cracks. Each member of this place should do that every day of the week. We have acknowledged the horrible wrongs perpetrated on the Fairbridge Farm children, and I agree that we can never let that happen again.

BUSHFIRE SEASON RISK MANAGEMENT

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Ku-ring-gai) [6.14 p.m.]: We all know that Australia is famous for its natural beauty. However, with that comes the savagery that the elements sometimes rain upon us. The electorate of Ku-ring-gai is a classic example of that. Ringed by bushland, it provides wonderful opportunities for enjoyment, but the flip side of that bushland backdrop is the danger that the annual bushfire season presents. The experts tell us that we may be facing a brutal bushfire season, with the Bureau of Meteorology advising of a strong El Nino climate pattern. This may result in a significant shift to drier conditions, and we now face the threat of increased bushfires throughout the summer.

Sydney has seen some devastating fire seasons in the past: throughout the 1950s; frequently in the 1980s; the devastating 1994 fires that made international headlines; the three weeks of blazes that flared on a hellishly hot Christmas Day in 2001; and most recently the 2012-13 summer fires that claimed hundreds of homes, most notably in the Blue Mountains, where more than 200 homes were lost. It was those 2012-13 fires that saw the introduction of what would come to be known as the "10/50 code". The 10/50 protections were designed to allow property owners to remove dangerous trees and vegetation near buildings.

Like all good legislation it was reviewed, and particularly because it became apparent that people were taking advantage of it; property owners were not utilising the provisions in the spirit in which they had been introduced. They were clearing trees and vegetation to maximise views and in some cases property values. In fact, an article published by the *North Shore Times* in March this year suggested that North Shore councils, including Ku-ring-gai Council, were reporting an unacceptable number of trees being felled by property owners since the introduction of the code last October. It was obvious that not all of the clearing was being done to ensure protection from bushfires.

Something needed to be done and has been done by this Government. Sensibly, the regulation was revisited by the NSW Rural Fire Service, the Department of Planning and Environment, and the Office of Environment and Heritage. The review resulted in 30 recommendations, all of which were accepted by the Baird Government. In short, the 10/50 provisions maintain the reduced entitlement to remove trees and vegetation within 100 metres of high-risk buildings or areas categorised by the Rural Fire Service as containing category 1 vegetation. That encompasses 85 per cent of properties historically destroyed in a bushfire.

I have seen a map of the fire front of the 1994 summer bushfires, and it is not an exaggeration to say that the electorate of Ku-ring-gai was ringed by fires. Endangered plant and fauna species are identified on a regular basis as our technology and knowledge of our surroundings develops. Therefore it is only right and fitting that our systems offer layers of protection not only for property owners but also for our environment. Residents can check their eligibility to use the 10/50 scheme and view a copy of the report at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/1050. They can even enter their home address to find out whether their property is covered by the 10/50 scheme.

Ku-ring-gai environmental groups should be pleased that the Baird Government has listened and

responded to concerns raised about trees being removed for selfish rather than practical or safety reasons. Ku-ring-gai is home to a precious few blue gum high forest remnants found in Sydney's north and some parts of the Sydney Basin as far west as Parramatta. In fact, the Office of Environment and Heritage estimates that what remains of this critically endangered tree species is to be found across less than 200 hectares, and in its largest patch less than 20 hectares. There has been an estimated 95 per cent depletion since European settlement. All of these remaining blue gum high forest stands, some of which are found in the electorate of Ku-ring-gai, are now surrounded by urban development. Therefore it is vital that all efforts are made to retain them, and the 10/50 scheme protections will help to achieve that.

To balance the dangers that sometimes exist in our bushland surroundings, I urge everyone to do all they can to prepare their homes for this potentially volatile bushfire season. Those measures include: clean gutters of leaves and twigs or install gutter guards, and repair damaged or missing tiles on the roof; install fine metal mesh screens on windows and doors; attach a fire sprinkler system to gutters; keep lawns short and gardens well maintained; cut back trees and shrubs overhanging buildings; and clean up fallen leaves, twigs and debris around the house. It is important to have hoses long enough to reach around the house. We all know that we are fortunate to live in this beautiful State, even with the unique quirks of its elements. I urge everyone to do what they can to keep themselves and their families safe this bushfire season.

WILLIAMTOWN LAND CONTAMINATION COMPENSATION

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens) [6.19 p.m.]: On 4 September 2015 many residents in Port Stephens woke to news that—unbeknownst to them at the time—would change their lives. Initially residents were told that contaminants were emanating from the RAAF Base Williamtown. They were described as "emerging contaminants" and residents within a specified zone were advised against eating chicken eggs, drinking bore water or eating locally caught fish, prawns and oysters. A one-month restriction was also placed on oyster farming and commercial and recreational fishing in Fullerton Cove and Tilligerry Creek. That was just the beginning.

Since then the line delineating affected areas has been redrawn to encompass many more properties, and the ban on commercial and recreational fishing has been extended for a further eight months. Some families have gone without any income for eight weeks. Our understanding of the so-called "emerging contaminants" has expanded. We now know of reports that expressly refer to these contaminants as being "undeniably carcinogenic". Properties in the so-called "red zone" have been formally valued as worthless. It has also emerged that the Department of Defence, the NSW Environment Protection Authority [EPA] and Port Stephens Council had known about the contamination for at least two years, and that they all chose not to share the information with our community. Let us take a look at how the New South Wales Government has responded.

The EPA's first communication about the contamination with our community was via a media release dropped in the middle of the night. Minister Speakman then informed the House about two panels of inquiry that were to be formed—the first, an inquiry into the EPA; and the second, a panel of experts. On the evening of the Minister's statement I attended a community forum at Stockton. The Department of Defence and all relevant State agencies were represented at that forum. Mr Scot MacDonald, MLC, was also there. About 150 residents also attended the meeting desperate for some answers, but there were none. In fact, information that was known to government representatives was not shared, including the announcement of an inquiry into the EPA.

Since then another two panels have been formed—a community representative panel and an elected political representative panel. We now have three panels and one inquiry into the EPA, yet the EPA has maintained its role as the lead agency; the expert panel reports to the EPA and the Department of Defence seemingly reports to no-one—and add to the mix this Government's deliberate and ongoing exclusion of me from processes and information that could assist in representing the interests of my community. There has been plenty of covering-up but no real coordination. Nor has there been a rising

above petty politics and not nearly enough respect for residents.

Last week the need for an independent coordinator became glaringly obvious when we learnt that the Department of Defence had ignored the EPA's advice on the dissemination of bore water test results. The department had advised some delighted residents that they had recorded "nil" contamination. But the EPA has since told them that their bore water could become contaminated, that the restrictions must remain in place and that they will remain in the "red zone". This appalling disconnect between Federal and State agencies is causing cruel and unnecessary stress to residents. Confidence has been at an all-time low since it was revealed that the Department of Defence, the EPA and Port Stephens Council have known about the contaminants exiting the base since 2013.

Hunter Water was given information in 2012, which led it to embargo its bores closest to the RAAF base. Why was our community not given the same information? They could then have chosen whether or not to use their bore water. I repeat: for two years local, State and Federal governments knew about contamination by a substance now regarded as carcinogenic and they did nothing. The impacts of not knowing earlier could be enormous. A resident in the first trimester of her first pregnancy told me of her fears, having listened to a toxicologist discuss the potential impacts of these contaminants on unborn children. She is reported in today's *Newcastle Herald* as saying:

You cannot get any clear answers, and I am having to consider the issue of risk to my baby from breastfeeding.

It is an understatement to say that our community has some trust issues. Community groups are raising money to conduct independent testing because they do not trust the Department of Defence or the EPA. What needs to happen? The Commonwealth must urgently provide financial assistance to the residents who have suffered, and continue to suffer, loss of income—particularly the commercial fishers who have been unable to earn an income for almost eight weeks and are facing at least another eight months. An independent overseer must be appointed to ensure that necessary connections are made across all jurisdictions and to give our community some confidence in the outcomes of this process. There must be a one-stop-shop where residents can access the information they need. All levels of government must coordinate their efforts to ensure that the health, wellbeing and financial impacts on our community are properly assessed, with genuine and meaningful solutions offered in a respectful and open manner. It is really not too much to ask.

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.24 p.m.]: I congratulate the member for Port Stephens on her advocacy for her community on this important issue. This is a matter of deep concern not only for the residents of Port Stephens but also for everyone who enjoys this beautiful part of New South Wales. The Minister said in question time today that he will be meeting with Senator Marise Payne, the Minister for Defence, to get to the bottom of these questions. This matter needs to be put beyond party politics. The community has a right to know what is going on. The Minister has given a commitment to report to the House. I will take this matter up with him as soon as I leave the Chamber.

KARONGA SCHOOL

Mr DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Epping) [6.25 p.m.]: Members may recall that earlier this month I wished the Higher School Certificate students in my electorate well in their exams. One of the schools I failed to mention was Karonga. Last Thursday I had the pleasure of attending the Karonga School year 12 graduation at the Epping Club. I was joined by Principal Mr Mark Gosbell. He and his teachers, and the volunteers on the school's parents and citizens association, work hard to make it a great school. Officially Karonga is described as a school which:

... offers educational programs for students with special needs from their early years through to the end of high school. The school provides programs of excellence in special education within a caring and supportive environment. [It forms] part of a network of services for children with special

needs provided by the Department of Education.

But, having spent time visiting the school and attending the graduation ceremony, I can proudly say that Karonga is more than a school; it is a family. The staff, parents and volunteers support each other in providing the students with an outstanding educational environment in which to grow and learn. They truly make a difference to the lives of children with disabilities and make an invaluable contribution to the local community. I am privileged to have Karonga in my electorate. Karonga focuses on individualised learning programs and encourages each student to realise their potential and to learn and grow with the support of the school community.

I read in one of the school's recent newsletters about the great work Jennifer Robertshaw, a school learning support officer, is doing with the school's gardening program. She is turning previously overgrown gardens into an attractive outdoor learning space for students. School learning support officers assist teachers in every class at Karonga. Over the last few years one local community organisation in particular has been a strong supporter of the school—Beecroft-Cheltenham Lions Club. I am proud to be a member of that club, which will be celebrating later tonight in this place. Lions Club President Doreen Moore and her team of dedicated Lions helped to raise money to refurbish the school's kitchen. That project also received funding through the Government's Community Building Partnership program.

As friends of the Beecroft-Cheltenham Lions Club, staff and students at Karonga hosted a plant stall at the recent Beecroft in Bloom festival, an annual charity fundraiser run by club volunteers. Plants and other products were prepared to showcase the work of students at Karonga. This school clearly wants to be part of the community and, to its credit, play an active role in participating and engaging with the wider community. I take this opportunity to acknowledge Megan Evans. Megan put a lot of hard work into organising the year 12 graduation dinner. It is not an easy task to put these things together and manage the challenges that arise along the way. The night was a great success and a credit to the school. Finally, I congratulate the four year 12 students who are graduating this year: Kevin, Parsa, Shruthi and Stephanie. I wish them all the best as they move on to other things. Well done on your achievements; you should all be very proud.

HOLSWORTHY ELECTORATE SCHOOLS AWARDS

Ms MELANIE GIBBONS (Holsworthy) [6.29 p.m.]: I would like to say how proud I am of the students and teachers within my electorate, as I know the member for Epping is of his. I am continually amazed by the people of the Holsworthy electorate and their accomplishments. I am proud to represent an area with so much focus on achievement for our children and young people. I am also proud of this Government's funding and support of the New South Wales education system. With this support, students and teachers in my electorate have been able to achieve some extraordinary things over the past few months and years.

I congratulate Samantha Lejeune, Ashlee Edgecombe, Natasha Sharma and Renee Small, all of whom are students at Moorebank High School, on achieving fourth place out of 23 teams across the State at the SunSprint Solar Challenge. The SunSprint Solar Challenge is an exciting competition for high school students from years 7 to 12 in which they team up to design, build and race a model car powered only by the energy of the sun. This annual challenge aims to raise awareness about solar energy and engineering in schools whilst providing students with an opportunity to develop their leadership, group work and communication skills.

The New South Wales regional vocational education awards were held on 19 October 2015. This year two students and a teacher from Lurnea High School were nominated and won awards in their categories. I am very proud of them. The NSW Training Awards are conducted annually by the NSW Department of Industry to recognise outstanding achievement in the vocational education and training sector. The awards honour and reward the achievements of students, trainers, teachers, training organisations, and large and small employers. Fatima Al Wahab received the student finalist award in

information and digital technology and Rachel McCarthy won the student finalist award for retail services. Mr Kumar, who has been a teacher at Lurnea High School for the past 10 years, received the teacher's award for excellence in delivering VET in information and digital technology.

This year, students from Casula Public School were selected by a teacher at their school, Mr Davis, to compete in the Liverpool District Debating Competition. At the end of this competition, Casula Public School succeeded in finishing in first place. Students were awarded their certificates and medals in a ceremony at Marsden Road Public School on Thursday 8 October. I congratulate all students who participated in this competition and particularly congratulate Mr Davis for his leadership and support. Their hard work and dedication has definitely paid off.

I am very excited to announce that a recipient of the Prime Minister's Prize for Excellence in Science Teaching in Secondary Schools is developing the minds of our future scientists and thinkers, teaching within my electorate at Casula High School. Dr Ken Silburn started teaching at Casula High School in 2000, when only eight year 11 students were enrolled in science subjects for the Higher School Certificate. Through his passion for teaching and science, Dr Silburn has been able to increase that number so that almost two-thirds of the year 11 students—nearly 80 students—take a science subject towards the Higher School Certificate, and almost half of those students take two science subjects. In an interview with the *Sydney Morning Herald* Dr Silburn said:

We let students tell their own stories through science. They do their own experiments about things they want to know about.

How cool is that? They get to choose what they want to learn. Obviously that will help them and instil the learning process. Dr Silburn thinks that this "student-led learning" leads to students having conversations with each other about science and helps them develop a larger passion for it—and obviously it works. I am very happy to hear about passionate and inspiring teachers in my local community. I thank Dr Silburn for his dedication and congratulate him on his prize. Finally, I reiterate how proud I am of the students and teachers in my electorate and I congratulate them all on their achievements. They are people to watch; they are going to be amazing young people. I hope to update the House again soon with even more stories of achievement from schools in the Holsworthy electorate.

CABRAMATTA ELECTORATE SMALL BUSINESSES

Mr NICK LALICH (Cabramatta) [6.33 p.m.]: Today I will talk about small businesses and entrepreneurs and how valuable they are, especially to my electorate. Cabramatta, particularly the central business district, is populated by entrepreneurs operating small businesses. They are mostly run and owned by migrants and refugees who came to this country seeking a life away from persecution. Australia has given them opportunity and peace, but these entrepreneurs do not take Australia for granted. They give back every day. They are the people creating jobs for the local community. They are the ones who fought to make Cabramatta the safe, thriving city it is today.

Most local businesses are family-run operations, with little kids running around in the back as their parents look after the shop or elderly grandparents operate the cash register. There are approximately 1,800 businesses registered in the area, and an amazing 86.5 per cent of these are considered small businesses, with fewer than four employees. After manufacturing, retail shops and accommodation and food services employ most of Cabramatta's workforce. There have been some fantastic business success stories from Cabramatta, inspiring stories of people who grew up there and cut their teeth working in the family business before branching out on their own.

Most members in this place would know of celebrity chef Luke Nguyen and his sister, Pauline Nguyen. Their family fled Vietnam in 1977. After a year in a refugee camp they settled in Cabramatta. Luke and Pauline got their love of food from their entrepreneurial parents, who ran a Vietnamese restaurant in Cabramatta for 15 years. I am sure that those 15 years taught Luke and Pauline the basics

of cooking and how to run a business. Luke went on to train and work with some well-known chefs before he and Pauline joined forces to set up their first restaurant, the Red Lantern, in 2002, when Luke was just 23 years old. Clearly the entrepreneurial gene was passed on. The Red Lantern has become the most awarded Vietnamese restaurant in the world. Luke has published several books and has hosted his own cooking show on SBS. His sister, Pauline, is also a published author and a filmmaker.

Then there is Michael Ma. Not many people in Australia know Michael but he is a well-known entrepreneur in Asia. Michael was born in 1967 in Laos and is of Chinese Teochew ancestry. He and his family came to Australia and settled in Cabramatta when he was just nine years old. He went on to attend the University of Wollongong, earning a degree in economics and marketing, before working for his dad, who was also a very successful entrepreneur and businessman in Cabramatta. Michael then worked as a commodities trader for a while. In 1999 Michael opened his first IndoChine restaurant, IndoChine Club Street, in Singapore. From there his IndoChine Group of restaurants and bars has grown to include 11 outlets in Singapore and 23 venues around the globe.

These are just some of the high-profile entrepreneurs from Cabramatta, but I am extremely proud of the owners and operators of small businesses in Cabramatta—the mums and dads who work endless hours at the shop, the kids running around helping mum and dad and the grandparents who are also lending a hand. These little guys are the true heroes. It is vital that the State Government helps these small businesses to thrive. There needs to be investment and there need to be incentives to help small business owners to undertake more training, to grow and to employ more workers. Small businesses are the heart of Cabramatta and the backbone of our country.

WOLLONDILLY ANGLICAN COLLEGE

Mr JAI ROWELL (Wollondilly) [6.37 p.m.]: My electorate of Wollondilly is home to an extremely vibrant, passionate and active school. Wollondilly Anglican College was founded in 2004 and its opening was attended by the then Prime Minister, John Howard. In the very short period of the school's life, the school has stood on its own two feet and become extremely active in the Wollondilly community. Today I recognise some of the students who have had amazing successes during their school careers in both sport and debating. It has long been my firm belief that sport is essential to the mental development and growth of young Australians.

Sport imparts essential life skills such as teamwork, commitment and communication to young adults and promotes healthy living to our younger generations. Much to the disappointment of my father, I was not very good at rugby league. I loved watching the National Rugby League [NRL] and went for the Magpies—or the Tigers as they call them now—but soccer was my game, growing up. Today I am honoured to acknowledge the accomplishments of Kirra Bennett-Smith. Kirra is currently in year 7 at Wollondilly Anglican College and has shown huge dedication to athletics. In 2015 she has had an amazingly successful season, placing second in the 12/13 Years Girls NSW All Schools Multi Event.

The multi event is a pentathlon in which participants compete in five different specialties, including long jump, 800 metres, shot-put, javelin and 200 metres. Astoundingly, Kirra also competed in the NSW All Schools Track and Field Championships, in which she was placed first in the under-12 girls long jump. It is no small effort to master such an array of events. I wish Kirra all the best for her career in athletics. I congratulate Marie-Luise Meier-Kapavale on her excellent performance in track and field this season. Marie-Luise is a hard worker and approaches every situation and every win with humility. She has broken numerous records and only last month received a bronze medal in discus at the NSW All Schools Track and Field Championships. To achieve bronze in that championship is an incredible outcome. I urge Marie-Luise to keep striving in athletics.

Another young student who has achieved an enormous amount is Matthew Simpson. Last month Matthew took part in the NSW All Schools Track and Field Championships, where he won gold in the under-12 boys 80-metre hurdles event—an amazing outcome. I am sure that Matthew has an extremely

promising future in the sport, given his dedication and commitment to athletics. I wish him all the best. I make special mention of Kye Madden, who has had a great rugby league career at Wollondilly Anglican College. Kye was selected for the NSW Combined Independent Schools team which competed at the Australian Championships. After that, Kye was offered a position in the under-18 schoolboys rugby league team and played in a two-test series against New Zealand in Queensland.

Recently he has been fortunate to begin training with the St George Illawarra squad—unfortunately, not Wests Tigers, but we wish him all the best anyway—no small feat for a young man who is in year 12. For such a young man Kye has achieved a considerable amount in the sport. I am sure that he has a very successful career in rugby league ahead of him. Ray Stone, currently in year 12 at Wollondilly Anglican College, has also had an astounding year of rugby league. In 2015 Ray debuted for the Wests Tigers under-20 team and was also selected to play in the New South Wales Christian independent schools team. Subsequently, Ray was selected to play in the under-18 Australian schoolboys rugby league team for a second consecutive year. Ray has achieved much in a short time. He can only keep improving and achieving in the sport that he loves.

Sport plays an important part in the development of Australia's youth, as do other activities. I acknowledge the efforts of those students who have excelled in debating at Wollondilly Anglican College. Debating imparts confidence and eloquence to students and they gain a lot from taking part in debating teams and competitions. I am sure that many of them will be elected to this place in years to come. I recognise the efforts of Jason Davies, Max Noakes, Maddison Traynor and Nicholas Fleming, who have been active and enthusiastic members of the Heads of Independent Co-educational Schools [HICES] debating squads at Wollondilly over the past four years. The students who participate in the HICES competition come from areas spanning Bathurst to the South Coast, the Central Coast, the Hunter Valley and the Sydney metropolitan region.

The competition allows students from independent schools to engage with each other and provides an invaluable experience. These dedicated pupils have twice been awarded the Chapman Cup as a result of their amazing performances in the 2012 and 2015 grand finals. Max Noakes and Jason Davies were awarded the Best Debater honour in the regional competition, as well as in the final, for four consecutive years, from 2012 to 2015. I extend my congratulations to the team on an amazing result and wish them all the best in their future endeavours. I thank the Principal of Wollondilly Anglican College, Dr Stuart Quarnby, and his staff for their great work.

HORNSBY QUARRY REMEDIATION PROJECT

Mr MATT KEAN (Hornsby—Parliamentary Secretary) [6.42 p.m.]: I share with the House an exciting update on the Hornsby quarry remediation project. Members will know the saga of the Hornsby quarry. Finally there is a solution to this intractable problem. It is a solution that I am very proud to have come up with and fought for. I am proud to be able to deliver it for my community. It is long overdue and will transform the Hornsby shire for future generations to enjoy. The environmental impact statement phase was recently completed. That signalled another important milestone in gaining approval to start work on fixing the 3.3 million cubic metre black hole that is the Hornsby quarry. The quarry is currently an unsightly wasteland that has been a community burden for more than a decade. It has been a bottomless money pit.

The council acquired the quarry, admittedly under difficult circumstances because of the compulsory acquisition process. Residents were forced to pay \$26 million for that big black hole, a space that is unusable. Every ratepayer in the Hornsby shire has been hit with a special rate variation over the past 10 years to fix the problem. When I came to office in 2011, the previous council was no closer to finding a solution to the problem after a decade. Recently the NorthConnex project presented a unique opportunity to finally fix the Hornsby quarry problem. It is my plan to take the spoil from the NorthConnex tunnel and use it to fill the hole, to stabilise the hole so that council can complete the job of fixing the quarry. My vision for the site is to turn this unique space, 40 hectares of prime real estate in the heart of

Hornsby, into the Centennial Park of our district.

I can tell that you, Mr Temporary Speaker, [Mr Bruce Notley-Smith] are excited about this but not as excited as I am and not as excited as the residents of Hornsby are. There will be bike tracks, walking trails, picnic areas, play areas and a sports field. It will be an extraordinary amenity that people from across New South Wales will come to Hornsby to enjoy. I see that the member for Cabramatta is already looking forward to bringing his tricycle up to ride around the Centennial Park of our district. This is an example of what can happen when three levels of government work together. I took the idea to the local mayor, Steve Russell. I thank him for his outstanding leadership. It has been a long time since the residents of Hornsby shire have had a mayor as committed to delivering for our community as he is. I also thank Federal members of Parliament Philip Ruddock and Paul Fletcher, who fought for the necessary funds to make this project happen.

I took the idea to the Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, and he received it enthusiastically. He saw the benefit of using the fill from the NorthConnex project, which was previously to go to a site in Western Sydney, to fix the problem in Hornsby. The Minister liked the idea, saw the benefit of it and worked with our community to make it happen. We needed to come up with \$22 million, which the State Government could not fund alone. The council, the State Government and the Federal Government—through the work of Philip Ruddock, the Father of the Federal Parliament, and my great friend Paul Fletcher, the newly appointed Federal Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects—came up with approximately \$7 million each to fix this problem once and for all.

The report on the submissions is now available. The next step in the project is for the Department of Planning and Environment to make a determination on whether the project goes forward. Forty-seven submissions were received, 30 from local residents, 10 from interest groups, six from others and one from council. The proposal has been refined to take into consideration all the feedback, including amending the peak hour outbound haul routes so that heavy vehicles can use a combination of haulage routes. The project is very exciting. It will not be without difficulty. There will be a large number of trucks travelling through Hornsby over the next two years. That is why we took the proposal to the election. We have a mandate from the people, and that is why we are committed to turning 40 hectares of prime real estate in that part of Sydney into an extraordinary amenity for future generations to enjoy.

Private members' statements concluded.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 6.48 p.m. until
Tuesday 10 November at 12 noon.**
